DAVIDS Repentance; OR A Plaine and Familiar Exposition upon the Li. Psalme:

First Preached & now Published for the benefit of Gods CHVRCH Most needfull for the times, by Samuell Smith, late Preacher of the word of God at Pittlewell in Essex.

LONDON
Printed by Edward Okes

David's Repentance.

OR,

A plain and familiar

EXPOSITION

OF

The LI Psalm.

First Preached and now Published for the benefit of God's Church.

Wherein every Christian may set before his eyes the pattern of unfeigned Repentance.

Likewise exhorting every man to labour for Repentance before Sickness and Death seize upon them; for after Death there is no Repentance to be had or expected.

The nineteenth Edition.

Newly revised and profitably amplified by the Author, *Samuel Smith*, late Preacher of the Word at *Prittlewel* in *Essex*.

Luke 13. 5. *Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.*

LONDON,
Printed by *E. Okes*, dwelling in Little S. *Bartholomews*, near *West-Smithfield*. 1667.

To the Christian Reader.

CHristian Reader, seeing the burthen of the Ministery is this, to pluck men out of the Kingdom of Satan, and to bring them to the living God; surely then it is the duty of all those that have taken upon them this holy Calling, to help forward this worthy work: And to this end I entertained my spare hours in the time of my long sickness (when I was not able to perform my duty in the Congregation of my charge) in publishing this short Exposition of the LI Psalm *to the view of the world, not for vain glory, or for any good conceit or opinion that I have of the same, or of my self, as he knoweth that knoweth all things; but chiefly for the honour of God, that if it please the Lord to give a blessing to it, sinners, even such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, might be moved to repentance. It is an opinion of carnal men, who remain under Satan and his dominion, (as all men do by nature) that when sin is committed, done and past, they shall never be called to account for the same. But (alas) no length of time can wear sin away, if it*

be not taken away by true and unfeigned repentance; yea, the sins of our youth, which many years ago we have committed, (if now in time we do not repent, and stop the mouth of the same) shall stand up as new and fresh against us as the first hour we committed them. O that we could be wise to think on these things! our selves wax old, our bodies declining to the grave; and will we take no pains to wash away our sins, but let them stand in their strength against us? This is a great folly. Let men therefore think of this betimes; there is no going to heaven with dry eyes, or on beds of Doun. Now if this poor work of mine may find entertainment with thee, I shall so much the more be encouraged to take pains in this kind on other places of Scripture, as upon the first Psalm, *which I have now published, with many other: And withall, may help thee forward to this necessary duty of repentance, I have then my desire. Give the praise to him from whom all good cometh, who worketh in us the will and the deed; to whom be praise and honour for ever and ever.* Amen.

Thine in the Lord,

SAMUEL SMITH.

The

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Pſalm 51.

To him that excelleth, *A Pſalm of David*, when the Prophet *Nathan* came unto him, after he had gone in unto *Bathſheba*.

1. *Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy loving kindneſs, according to the multitude of thy compaſſions put away mine iniquities.*

2. *Waſh me throughly from my wickedneſs, and cleanſe me from my ſins.*

3. *For I know mine iniquities, and my ſin is ever before me.*

4. *Againſt thee, againſt thee onely have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight: that thou maiſt be juſt when thou ſpeakeſt, and clear when thou judgeſt.*

5. *Behold, I was born in iniquity, and in ſin hath my mother conceived me.*

6. *Behold, thou loveſt truth in the inward affections: therefore haſt thou taught me wiſdom ſecretly.*

7. *Purge me with hyſop, and I ſhall be clean, waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter then ſnow.*

8. *Make me to hear of joy and gladneſs, that*

th

the bones which thou haſte broken may rejoyce.

9. Hide thy face from my ſins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.

11. Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

12. Reſtore me to the joy of thy ſalvation, and eſtabliſh me with thy free Spirit.

13. Then ſhall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.

14. Deliver me from bloud, O God, the God of my ſalvation, and my tongue ſhall ſing joyfully of thy righteouſneſs.

15. Open thou my lips, O Lord, and my mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy praiſe.

16. For thou deſireſt no ſacrifice, though I ſhould give it: thou delighteſt not in burnt-offerings.

17. The ſacrifices of God are a contrite ſpirit: a contrite and broken heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.

18. Be favourable unto Sion, for thy good pleaſure, build up the walls of Jeruſalem.

19. Then ſhalt thou accept the ſacrifice of righteouſneſs, even the burnt-offering and oblation. Then ſhall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.

A plain and familiar

EXPOSITION

UPON

The LI Pſalm.

First preached and now publiſhed for the benefit of God's Church, &c.

PSALM LI.

The Text.

To him that excelleth: A Pſalm of David, when the Prophet Nathan came unto him, after he had gone in unto Bathſheba.

CONcerning the Book of the Pſalms, it is an Epitome of the whole Scripture, teaching us what we are to believe,

believe and do, both to God and man. In which, as in a glass, we may clearly behold the Nature of God, his wisdom, goodness and mercy towards his Church and his children: as also most notable spectacles of his fearful wrath and vengeance against the wicked and ungodly.

If men would pray unto God, and crave for any mercy and blessing at his hands, here be excellent platforms of true, hearty and most earnest prayers. If men would give thanks for any blessings received, for judgments escaped, or for deliverance from wicked and ungodly men, here be worthy examples and directions: if men would find comfort in temptations, troubles and afflictions, and learn with patience to bear them, there is no part of the Bible more sweet and comfortable. And therefore it should be our delight and study, and we ought to spend the more time in reading, and also in the meditation of so excellent and worthy a Book, according to that of our Saviour, *John* 5. 29.

5. 29 *Search the Scriptures*; because that will bring a man to true happiness in the end, namely, to know God to be his Creator, to know Jesus Christ to be his deliverer, to know himself, and to direct him in that narrow path that shall lead unto life.

I thought good to speak of this Psalm, because it containeth in it a most worthy example of true and unfeigned repentance, without which there is nor, nor can be any pardon of sin: *Except ye repent ye shall all perish.*

Now it containeth a famous and most worthy example of repentance, if you either regard the person, who was a renowned and eminent King of *Israel*, a holy Prophet of God, yea, a man after God's own heart.

Again, in the matter of the Psalm, and of his repentance, you shall see a spectacle of two great and grievous sins committed by *David*, wherein we may also see the great frailty and weakness of God's children by nature,

ture, which may teach us to pray unto the Lord for the Spirit of corroboration; for if *David* fell, who was a holy man, whether shall we fall who are great sinners, if God do but a little leave us to ourselves? And howsoever by the special mercy of God towards *David*, this sin of his prevailed not to his eternal condemnation, yet we see what terrour of conscience and grief of heart he sustained, before he could be assured of his former comfort. And this shall all flesh find, that the pleasures of sin for a season here, will bring with them sorrow in the end, a thousand tears and sighs for one sin of pleasure. As for the repentance of *David*, we shall see it most excellent and admirable; for he doth freely and truly confess his sins, and is not ashamed to Chronicle them even in the Word of God, for all posterity to read and peruse. And lastly, we shall see the endless love and mercy of God towards poor and miserable sinners, when they shall truly repent and seek for mercy.

The

The whole Psalm contains two parts: First, the Preface of the Psalm, shewing the occasion of it, and by whom it was penned; and secondly, the Psalm it self, which contains in it nothing else but a most earnest prayer of *David*, as a poor prisoner arraigned and condemned at the Bar of God. And the petitions of the Psalm are two-fold: First, there be some concerning *David* himself, to the eighteenth verse: And secondly, some concerning the good of the whole Church in general; because his sin had endangered not onely his own estate, but even the good and flourishing estate of the whole Church of God, and his own Nation.

Dividing of the Psalm.

In the Preface or Title of this Psalm,

First, mark to whom this excellent Psalm was committed, *To him that excelleth*: or, *To the excellent Musician*

Secondly, by whom it was penned, *A Psalm of David.*

Thirdly, the circumstance of time when it was penned, *When Nathan the Prophet came* unto him.

Then

Then fourthly, the occasion of it, namely, *Nathan*'s message from the Lord, sharply reproving *David*'s sins, namely, adultery and murther.

To him that excelleth, or to the excellent Musician.

First, to whom this Psalm was committed. 1 Chr. 15 1 Chr. 9. 1

The Prophet *David*, when he had written any Psalm for the comfort and benefit of the Church of God, was wont, as it seemeth, to commit them unto those men who were appointed Masters of the Musick, wherein they did sing in the Temple to God's glory, as *Heman*, *Asaph*, *Corah*, *Jeduthun*, &c. And therefore *David* and *Solomon* were commanded of God to appoint some Companies of Musicians to sing unto God: these were the Masters of the Musick, to set the Tunes, and dispose them. You must understand now *David* was not the Author of all these Psalms, though they be called *David*'s Psalms, but some other Saints and holy men did pen some of them as well as he; but *David*, being a man after God's own heart, did cause them to be gathered & collected, and called them his Psalms.

From

From hence, that *David* did commit this Psalm and the rest to the Masters of Musick, to be sung in the Churches of God to his glory; and especially this 51 Psalm, being one of the seven Penitential Psalms, or rather a Psalm of Psalms, for comfort to an afflicted mind; therefore was this Psalm placed by the wisest in the midst of the other penitential Psalms, even as the Sun is placed in the midst of the Firmament. Likewise we learn, that the singing of Psalms in the Assemblies and Congregation of God's people, is not onely ancient custom of the Church of God, but very lawful and commendable; used as we see here in the dys of *David* and *Solomon*, and commended them to God. Now the Birds, which are but poor creatures in respect of man, should stir us up to sing Psalms: as St. *Ambrose* reports, it would make a man to blush when he considers how the Nightingale and Lark every morning and evening sing out their Notes to the glory of their Maker, and man so much to neglect

Doct. 2. Singing Psalms an ancient practise.

The 7 Penitential Psalms.
Psal. 6.
Psal. 32.
Psal. 38.
Psal. 51.
Psal. 102.
Psal. 130.
Psal. 143.

glect his Maker, as not morning and evening to ſing praiſes unto his holy Name. It is God's own command that we ſhould ſing, and therefore it is good. The Book of Pſalms is called the Song of Heaven, and the key to Paradiſe; and when we ſing theſe Pſalms, we muſt do it with the duty of holineſs and obedience. *David* he was ſtyled the ſweet Singer of *Iſrael*; *O*, ſaith he, *ſing praiſes, ſing praiſes to our God upon a ten ſtringed inſtrument*. In the Church triumphant, there they ſing *Hallelujah* to the Almighty, and in the Church militant we ſing, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hoſts*. So it was the uſual practiſe of Chriſt and his Apoſtles to ſing Pſalms or Hymns after they had eaten; and it is ſaid of *Paul* and *Silas*, that being in priſon they ſung Pſalms at midnight in the ſtocks, even there they ſung Pſalms to God: the Virgin *Mary* ſhe ſung, *My ſoul doth magnifie the Lord*; and ſo likewiſe of old *Simeon*, *Lord now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace:* ſo in *David*, *I will ſing a new ſong unto the Lord*; and in the days of

Acts 16. 25.

the Apoſtles it was uſed, as *Paul* ſhews, commanding the *Coloſſians*, and all Chriſtians to uſe this holy exerciſe: *Admoniſh your ſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging with a grace to the Lord in your hearts.* Col. 3. 16 1 Cor. 14

This then ſhould ſtir us up to the more careful practiſe of this godly duty, and it condemns the prophaneneſs of thoſe ſcoffing wretches, who mock, as at all other duties of God's people, their prayer, hearing, reading, exhorting, &c. ſo at their ſinging of Pſalms. Alas, theſe prophane men, and graceleſs wretches, having no grace in their hearts, they ſee not nor perceive not the inward comfort which God's children find in ſinging of Pſalms unto their God.

But ſome may ſay, I could never receive any ſuch ſpiritual joy in ſinging of Pſalms. It may be ſo, and thine eſtate is ſo much the more to be feared. As the prodigal ſon in the 15 of St. *Luke* did know it, and enjoy it, ſo the eldeſt ſon asked what manner of joy it is? And ſo many worldlings ask, *quale gaudium?* We anſwer,

ſwer, that which is known by taſte, cannot by ſpeech: ſo taſte what joy it is, and then as Chriſt ſaid, *I have bread to eat, and ye know not of it:* ſo may the Chriſtians ſay, I have joy, and ye know not of it.

But becauſe moſt men and women think it an excellent and comfortable practiſe, I will ſhew you how we ought to be qualifi'd, leſt we take more delight in the ſweetneſs of the Muſick, than in the comfort of the Pſalm, we do but make a noiſe, and are like ſounding braſs, loſing the benefit of ſinging, yea, take the holy Name of God in vain.

How to ſing aright.

Firſt then, that we may ſing to God's glory, and to our comfort, we muſt ſing with the heart and with the underſtanding: ſo Saint *Paul, Col.* 3. 16. ſaith, *I will pray and ſing with the ſpirit and underſtanding*, that is, with knowledge and underſtanding of that I ſing; and not as the Papiſts uſe to roar in their Maſſes in Latin, ſo as none that hear them underſtand what is ſaid or what is done, nay, ſcarce themſelves.

Second-

Secondly, for the matter of our singing, it must be Psalms or Hymns, and spiritual Songs, not vile and filthy Songs, which are the Devils Musick in the mouthes of prophane persons: wherefore let us put away all vile and filthy Songs, and let us cheer up our spirit, and make our selves merry with *David's* Musick. As the Spirit of God hath given him the name of the sweet Singer, so let his Musick be sweet in our ears, let us often sing this Psalm, and other his mournful songs, that we may be filled with the joy of the Spirit, as he was, and pass from hence into those eternal joys whether he is entered, that so joyntly we may sing *Hallelujah* together.

Thirdly, we must not sing to spend the time, or to satisfie our ears with the noise or tune; but singing we must seek to express our thankfulness to God, to redeem the time, as St. *Austin* did, be not like the tinkling Cymbals, nor the Musick of children. And therefore we must ever labour our selves to be affected

in

in ſinging with cheerfulneſs unto God.

Fourthly, in ſinging, ſeeing it is a part of prayer, we muſt look to do it with all reverence as unto God himſelf: and as we would ſhew an ſeemly and decent behaviour when we thank our ſuperiours for a good turn, ſo ſhould we to God, and with more reverence. Theſe things being duly conſidered, ſinging, it doth procure dignity and grace to the holy action, and much availeth to ſtir up the mind to true affection, and ferventneſs of prayer: but we muſt diligently beware, that our ears be not more bent to the note, then our minds to the ſpiritual ſenſe of the words.

By whom it was penned. 1 Sam. 9. 14. 2 Sam. 13.

The ſecond point in the Title of the Pſalm, is the Pen-man of this Pſalm, howſoever it was indited by the holy Ghoſt, who was the Author of it, yet you ſee it was penned by *David*, a worthy and renowned King of *Iſrael*, a holy Prophet of God, a man after God's own heart, endued with excellent and ſingular gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit.

Now

Use 1.

Now from the Pen-man of this excellent Psalm, who was so worthy a King and Prophet, and containing in it such excellent and necessary matter, it ought to move us to the great liking and regard of this excellent Psalm, for we will listen to the speeches of Learned men: Their counsels and their exhortations, being wise, grave, godly, and learned, do most affect us. Lo then, here is a Psalm, penned by a most skilfull Musitian, by a renowned King, and worthy servant of God: Yea, a man after God's own heart. Now the person that wrote this Psalm, should move us very often to the liking of the matter contained in this Psalm. *Ahab* said of *Micaiah*, he never prophesied good: So *David*, the sweet Singer of *Israel*, always good: *The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever.* He was loved of God, the anointment spiritual and temporal doth verifie it: Applauded of all both men and women. *David hath killed his ten thousands*: A man justified of his enemies, *Thou art more righteous than*

Psal. 119. 100.

I; esteemed of his subjects, *Thou art worth ten thousand of us. A man more learned then his teachers.* He was a compound of virtues, a man after God's own heart; yet no way desiring the vain applause of men, confesseth here his sin, casteth his Crown at the Lamb's feet, with the 24 Elders, contending to give glory to God, that so he might find peace on earth. O what an excellent thing were this, if Kings, Nobles, and great men, would imitate *David* in this, to call themselves to account of their sinful and youthful crimes; and to set down their lives, that so they might have matter to praise God for his blessings, and to acknowledge their sins with *David*. *David* then was the Author and Writer of this Psalm, yet *David* reports the fault in himself, as if some stranger had committed it: He forgets as it were his own people, and his Fathers house, setting all affection aside, maketh a plain declaration of his own transgression. *A wise man* (saith *Solomon*) *will accuse himself, Prov.* 18. So doth

David

David, not ſhrowding his head, nor running into a Buſh as *Adam* did, but writing his fault in his brow, and pointing with his finger at the Tranſgreſſour under his own name, ſaith, *A Pſalm of* David, *being reproved by* Nathan, &c.

Writers of the Scripture ſet forth firſt their own imperfections.

And indeed this doth make greatly for the Authority of the Word of God, in that the writers of it do not ſtick to ſet forth their own frailties and imperfections, that God might have the honour, and man bear the deſerved blame; contrary unto the manner of the writers of this world, that howſoever againſt enemies they ſpeak all, and more than all, or extoll their friends to the higheſt, yet in them we find few examples in laying open the errors of themſelves, eſpecially when in any ſort it may be concealed.

This courſe we may behold in the whole Scriptures. *David* he recorded his Adultery, and Murther, as here in this Pſalm, his repentance of them: 1 Sam. 1.

Jonah his diſobedience; *Job* his impatience; the Idolatry of *Solomon*; the Job 31. 1 Reg. 3.

Num. 11. Note.

discontentedness of *Moses*; the fretting of *Jeremy*, and the like. Here we may see the wisdome of the Word of Life, here we may admire their Spirits, who, to give God the glory, do rejoyce in their infirmities, and proclaim their own follies. And if we would compare these Writers, inspired with the holy Ghost, with the works and writings of other men, we must either shut our eyes, or else acknowledge a great difference.

The time when this Psalm was penned.

The third circumstance, is, the Time when this excellent Psalm was penned, and that is expressed, *When Nathan the Prophet came unto him.* Concerning the sense of these words, some men differ: Some think that *David* being fallen, lay in his sins a whole year, without any touch of conscience, and sound repentance for them. But it is not like, as others think, that so worthy a man as *David* was, *after God's own heart*, could lye so long in sinne without any remorse and touch of conscience. For my part, I take it, that though *David* could not be so stony and

and ſo ſteelly hearted, or benummed, but muſt needs have ſome griping and ſting of conſcience; and no doubt his heart muſt needs ſmite him, unleſs he had been more forgetful than the vileſt ſinner. So, for all that he was not ſo humbled for his great and grievous ſin as he ought to have been, till ſuch time as *Nathan* the Lord's Prophet came to rowſe him, by the alarum of God's judgments denounced againſt him; wherein we may ſee firſt, that the child of God may both fall fouly, and lye in ſin a long time without repentance: And ſecondly, that the Miniſtry of *Nathan* is needfull to reclaim us, elſe we ſhall not only ſin, but lye and wallow in them. And indeed, not ſo much the falling into ſin, as the lying in ſin, wounds the conſcience, and procures God's judgments. God did not leave *David* without armour for his wounded conſcience, when *Nathan* told him, *Thou art the man:* No, he gave him a heart to repent for his ſin; for ſin brings firſt repentance, and then repentance brings forgiveneſs. *David* 2 Sam 12.

presently confesseth, and saith, O Lord, I have done these secret sins which none but thy All-seeing eye can discern: *David* thought when he enjoyed the sweet water of content, and pleasure, that all was well; he did not remember that his sweet water must return to the salt Sea again; for his little pleasure to have a World of sorrow.

Hence we may gather first of all, for our great comfort, that it is the Lord's mercy, sometimes to let a man fall into sin. For as we build a wall the higher, by casting the foundation deeper; So the Lord by humbling his children, oftentimes raiseth them up. As in a Tempestuous wind, Trees shaken by the root, in calm do spread themselves the more: So the child of God, having his root shaken, doth more strongly fasten himself in Christ Jesus.

Doct. The child of God may fall after he is called.

Note in *David*, A man after God's own heart, that the true child of God, after he is truly and effectually called and sanctified, may very dangerously fall, and sin against God, even

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as *David* himself did: So *Josephs* brethren, how did they conspire against him, to sell him? yea, to kill him? and lay a long time, yea, almost twenty years in that sin before they were truly humbled for it. How foully did *Peter* fall, though he did not lye long in sin? for the Text saith, *as soon as he heard the cock crow, he remembred the words of his Master, so he went out and wept bitterly*; And as the Judgment-hall was a place of sinning, so it was no place of repenting; but he *went out presently and wept bitterly*. And as *Clemens Alexandrinus* doth testifie, he wept so sore, that he made dents and furrows in his cheeks, with the tears that did fall from his eyes; yea, his repentance was so great, that he leapt into a Sea of tears, when he denied Christ. St. *Peter* he wept for his sins bitterly; he wept, and mingled with his tears, the gall of an holy and spiritual revenge and anger, for the sin he committed, and the good he had omitted. So likewise St. *Paul*, when he saw his sin of cruelty, blasphemy, and persecution of the Church of God, what a

Gen. 37.

Mat. 26. 70.

revenge did he take upon himself; in watching, and praying, and fasting, and in labouring to build up the Church of God again, which he before had pulled down, even to the hazard of Life, both by Sea and Land; by Thieves, and Robbers, and divers other perills. Thus man for a little pelf, runs himself into a world of dangers; and for a momentary pleasure, hazards his Soul to eternal perdition, by the uncleanness of his heart. Yea, as *Job* saith, *Job* 15. *What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman, that he should be just: Behold, he found no stedfastness in his Saints, &c.* And *Pro.* 20. 9. *Who can say, I have my heart clean?* All which testimonies of Scripture serve to confirm the truth of this Doctrine, that the best of God's Saints in this Life, are oftentimes overtaken by the policy of Satan, and the frailty of their own flesh, to commit great and grievous sins: Yea, the dearest of God's children sometimes are asleep. *Matthew* 25. *The wise and foolish Virgins both slept.* But yet here

here is the difference; the wise awakened, arose out of their security; the foolish prolonged the time. O then, if Christ Jesus have looked upon us, as he did upon *Peter*, let us look upon our selves; if *Nathan* be come, let us sleep no more.

Seeing that God's children may thus fall into sin, and lie in sin so long a time; although no man may hereby be emboldened to sin with *David*, much less to lie in sin without repentance: Yet we find, that such hath been our security, and exceeding carelesness, that God leaving us in his just judgment, we have sinned, and lain in sin a long time, a year or two, or ten; yet if we can repent, and truly turn to God, as *David* did, we need not doubt but he will shew us mercy, as to *David*. *At what time soever.* The Lord limits no time if men do repent truly: but if men shall defer their repentance in hope of this, that they may repent hereafter, then let them take heed least the Lord cast them off ere they be aware, or else leave them to *Use* 1.

hardneſs of heart, and impenitency like *Pharaoh*, like *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*; or like *Herod*, or like *Ananias*, and *Sapphira*. And there is a great difference between this, when a man hath lain in ſin, and the time is paſt; and when a man commits ſin, and deferrs in hope of time to come.

Here we may ſee the difference between this life and the life to come. Here in this life, the remnants of ſin, as ſo many ſpots and ſtains in the fleſh, remain even in thoſe which are cleanſed by the blood of Chriſt: But when as the faithfull ſhall be glorified, they ſhall then be found unblameable, without ſpot or blemiſh. If we ſhall now caſt our eyes even upon the beſt of God's holy ſervants, as *Noah*, who forgot himſelf, and drank too much Wine, *ſo that he was overcome by it.* Gen. 9. 2. *Abraham* had his infirmity, giving at firſt little or no credit to what the Lord had told him; that his Wife *Sarah* ſhould bear a Son. Gen. 17. 17. *Lot* had his weakneſs of nature alſo, *in committing inceſt with his Daughters.* Gen. 19. 33. *Joſeph*

Joseph had his weakness also, for no sooner is he become a Courtier, and in *Pharaoh's* Court, but presently he learns to swear, *by the life of Pharaoh.* Gen. 42. 15.

David, who is the occasion and subject of our present discourse, had his failings, in killing *Uriah* with the sword: Secondly, in taking *Uriah's* Wife to be his. 2 Sam. 12. 9.

Peter, he had his slips and infirmities, in denying his Lord and Master with oaths and curses, so that he must have a silly creature, a Cock, to put him in mind of his error. Mat. 26. 27.

Paul, he had his natural passion of revenge burning in him, in getting Letters to persecute the Christians at *Jerusalem*, and he must have a voice from heaven to convert him; but being converted, what a stout Souldier was he in fighting the Lord's Battle? Act. 9. 22.

St. *Thomas*, he had his fault of infidelity, though an Apostle, and would not believe till he had felt and seen the wounds of his Master Christ Jesus, who confirmed and settled his faith, and then he could confess, and say, My Lord, and my God. Joh. 20. 27, 28.

Old *Zacharias* the Priest, had his Luk. 1. 18

his infirmities as well as the rest; for the Angel told him, that his Wife should conceive a Son; which he doubted of, and said, *Whereby shall I know this?* He must have an Angel to confirm it to him. Thus we may easily see shame in glory, darkness in light, folly in wisdome, infidelity in faith.

But when Christ shall appear, and we likewise participate with him in glory, we shall be made like unto him. Here we cease not to provoke God by reason of our sins, which continually we do fall into, which should be unto us as bitter as Gall or Wormwood: But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up into victory, then shall we cease to sin, and be as the blessed Angels in Heaven.

Use 3. Repentance is not in man's power.

We see that repentance is not in man's power, but it is the special gift of God: For if the Lord had not sent *Nathan* to him, to awake his benummed conscience, alas, he had run on still in sin, he had lain and rot-

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ted in his sins: But the Lord sends his servant *Nathan* to admonish him, and to awaken him. And so the people of God acknowledge in many places of the Scripture, *Convert thou us, O Lord, and we shall be converted.* Again, *Instruct them with meekness, proving if God will at any time give them repentance, that they may be saved.* O then, seeing repentance is not in man's power, but it is the special gift of God neither could *David* turn of himself, though he turned from God of himself: What madness then is it for men and women to defer all till the last gasp; saying, if they may have but three hours before Death, they care for no more; as though they had repentance at command. But Oh thou vain man, see *David*, he fell by his own will, but could not rise by his own power: And art thou better than *David*? No, no; unless the Lord give thee repentance, thou canst never repent. Oh then seek at God's hands, and repent while the Lord calls, and offers thee the means. For first, our persons must be accep-

Jer. 31. 18. 2 Tim. 2. 25.

Man sins by Nature, but cannot rise without Grace.

accepted, and then our prayers God will hear, as he did *Davids*; for *David* said, *I have called upon thee in the time of trouble, and thou didst hear me.*

Seeing that *David* repented not, till he was awaked and rowsed up by *Nathan* the Lord's Prophet and Minister, and thought himself safe, and that he had got Heaven; but he went towards Heaven even as *Pharaoh's* Chariots did after the Children of *Israel*, with heavy wheels, burthensome: But when he had notice of his sin, he then went light, and joyfully to meet his God, saying, *I have sinned.*

Doct. 3. The Word preached, be means to beget faith and repentance.

Hence I gather, That the word of God preached, is the means both to beget Faith and Repentance, and to increase and revive the same; for how had *David* gone on still in sin, if *Nathan* had not humbled him by the Word of God? It is able to break a stony heart, it is able to wound a heart of steel: For what heart can be more obstinate, rebellious, stubborn, stony, and steelly, then was the heart of the cruel *Jews*? Yet by *Peter's* Sermon they were pricked, and throughly wounded

Act. 2. 37.

wounded and humbled. *Is not the word of Jehovah like unto fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the stone?* It is able to break a stony heart, which is as hard as flint. *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of God, because I know it is the power of God to salvation to all them that believe.* It is compared to a sharp two-edged Sword, *It is mighty in operation, and sharper then a two-edged Sword:* It is able to give life to those that are dead in trespasses and sins. Jer. 23. 29. Rom. 1. 16. Heb. 4. 12 Eph. 1. 1, 2.

So then we must acknowledge a perpetual necessity of the Word, to beget us, also to increase in us the graces of Faith and Sanctification, which without the use of the Word preached, are subject, if not to dying, yet to decreasing; if not to perishing, yet to diminishing. And from hence it is, that the Lord saith of his Vineyard, his Church, *Esay* 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, least any assail it; I will keep it night and day.*

We see by daily experience, that after our repentance, and the renewing of our minds, we are subject to stumble

ble, and to fall into ſin, and ready to lie long in it, as men caſt into a deep and long ſleep, if we be not awaked with the Lords Trumpet, as we may ſee by this preſent example of *David*, who was by the ſubtilty of Satan ſurprized, and drawn to commit two horrible ſins, Adultery and Murther, and lay a long ſpace ſecurely in them, untill he was by the Prophet *Nathan* rowſed up and recovered. 2 *Sam.* 12.

Wherefore as there is a continuall uſe and neceſſity of repentance, ſo is there a continual uſe of the Preaching of the Word, that we ſhould not ſtand at a ſtay, but increaſe more and more, till we come to the fulneſs of the perfect age of Chriſt Jeſus.

Uſe 1. This ſerves to commend unto us the power of the word of God, which is both able to kill ſinners, and to make them alive again, and puts a manifeſt difference between the word of man and the Word of God. All the wiſdome, learning, eloquence, and wit of man, is not able to ſave a ſoul, to convert a ſinner, onely the word of God can

God's Word only converts.

can do it, even the plain and ſimple Preaching of the Goſpel can do it: *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul.* Though nothing be more contrary to our nature than the Word of God, yet it doth by God's bleſſing convert us. 1 Cor. 1. 15. Pſ. 19. 7. Rom. 2. 14.

Well then, ſeeing *Nathan* is the meſſenger, and the means that God uſes to reclaim *David*, thus ſleeping ſecurely in his ſin, whereas the Lord could have converted him without *Nathan*'s help. We ſee then, that thoſe men who do deſpiſe *Nathan*, and the Lord's Prophets and Miniſters, muſt needs dye in ſin, without any repentance, who cannot endure themſelves to be admoniſhed and reproved; even as a man having a long feſtred Sore, that is even rotten and putrified, he cannot abide the Chyrurgeon ſhould touch it, or lance it: Alas, it will be his bane in the end. So, is thy Soul ſick, full of rottenneſs and corruption, and yet thou continueſt in ſin, and lieſt therein, and wilt not ſuffer the Lord's Chyrurgeons? Thou canſt not endure *Nathan* to be ſo buſie *Uſe* 2. Deſpiſers of the Word muſt needs periſh. *Note.*

busie with thy sins, what will follow but utter ruine of thy soul, and the bane of it? A guilty Conscience betrays it self before it be examined, therefore God hath given man a Conscience, and placed it within him, as an eternal remembrancer; which at one time or other breaks out, and cries guilty, when no man accuses him. And therefore, let all men be content to have their heart searched with the tents of the Law, to be ript up, and lanced till the blood follow, for this is the next way to be cured.

Doct. 4. A fearfull thing to live in sin without repentance.

In *David*, observe what a fearfull thing it is to lye in sin without repentance; it is that which maketh a grievous wound in the conscience, draweth down many and grievous judgments of God, as in *David*; he felt the smart of his sin a long time, yea, carried the skars of it to his grave, it was a clog unto him all his life. *Peter* committed a grievous sin in denying his Lord and Master; yet he lying not in sin, repented presently, went out, and wept bitterly, and so had a Pardon. But lying

lying in ſin, is that which wounds the conſcience, and draws down God's judgments, both on ſoul and body, weakens our faith, makes us cold in prayer, and in holy duties. Yea, the wrath of God doth follow ſuch as make no conſcience of ſin; giving them over to a reprobate ſence, to a ſlumbering ſpirit, and to hardneſs of heart, that they prove in the end to be paſt feeling, *Rom.* 1. 28. And ſurely it is juſt with God, that he ſhould forſake them by his grace, who have forſaken him by their ſins. This is that which the Prophet declareth concerning the ſecret judgment of God upon ſinners, that do make ſhipwrack of Faith, and of a good conſcience, *Pſal.* 81. 11, 12. *My people would not hear my voice, and* Iſrael *would none of me; ſo I gave them up unto the hardneſs of their hearts, and they have walked in their own counſel.* Whence he ſhews, that ſeeing they would not be reclaimed and reformed, he ſuffered them to run their whole ſwing unto all ſin and wickedneſs. We muſt make haſte from

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our sins, as *Lot* did from *Sodom*, leaſt we be conſumed with them, as the *Sodomites* were; we muſt likewiſe make haſte to repent, ſo as *Zacheus* did, who came down eagerly to entertain Chriſt. Sin is like a diſeaſe in the bones, it very hardly will be cured; for that which is bred in the bone will hardly out of the fleſh; Reperance is not ſo ſoon gotten as we imagine, it is dangerous to defer repentance; for delays in many things bring danger with them. Some think it time enough to repent when the Bell is tolling them out of the World we miſtake it always, for Sickneſs may ſo diſable us, that we cannot be ſenſible of our own grief: That man that doth forget God when he is living, God will forget him when he is dead; for God prepared heaven for the good, and the torments of hell for the wicked. We muſt be like *Naaman* the *Syrian*, in making haſte to *Eliſha* the Prophet; ſo muſt we make haſte to Chriſt which is our Saviour, if we will have forgiveneſs of our ſins; if we will enjoy heaven, we muſt climb

Heaven

Heaven by our repentance: If we believe God will punish the wicked for their transgressions, why then do we provoke him to wrath, and cause him to punish us? It is long of our selves. If we will like *Esau* spend our time in pleasure, and in hunting, we must then with *Esau* lose the blessing: but if we will hearken to our wife *Rebecca*, which is the Church, she will shew us quietly how we shall get the blessing. Late Repentance is seldome true, though Repentance may be never too late, if God shew mercy. Repentance cannot be good when it is deferred, and put off. We cannot have Repentance in a string, or at our own wills; therefore we must seek and labour for repentance while we have time, strength of body, and ability of mind; for after this Life is expired, there is no repentance but in Hell, with sorrow, and howling, and with gnashing of teeth. We must not like the Papists expect to have a Purgatory, and there to stay some certain time to repent, hoping some Pope or other to be present to seal us a Pardon, which

which is as much as if it were sealed with Butter: Being an invention only to delude poor people of the true way to salvation, and of their money; they may as well look for a harvest of Corn upon a hedge of thorns, as for a Pardon or Forgiveness of sin from them. For those that trust and seek to them for Pardons, do as many men do, who go to a Lottery, and venture a summe of money to get a Prize, and then thinks he hath amongst his Lots got something, and when he openeth, he finds nothing but blank: Just so it is with their Pardons, of no valew, all blank.

Use 1. Hence we learn, what a dangerous thing it is to give any entertainment to sin; it is like to a bold and shameless guest, who, if he be once invited, will be so hardy, that he will come again unbidden. It is like the breaking in of water, that can hardly be stopped. We may see this in the example of *Cain*, who was reproved of God, checked for his hatred against his Brother, and admonished to repent. *Gen.* 4. 8. *But*

heark

hearkned not unto the voice of the Lord, but hardened his heart, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of his Brother. This appeareth in *Judas*; he entertained covetousnes in his heart, from covetousnes he fell to plot with the *Pharisees*, from plotting he proceeded to practising, and in the end he brake out to treason against his Lord and Master. Mat. 26. 15.

The like we may see of *Saul*, that as he fell away from God step by step, so did the Spirit of God forsake him: For as amongst all the blessings that God doth bestow upon the Sons of men in this World, a soft and tender heart is one of the greatest, which is soon made to bleed, and brought to repentance, and amendmen of life, *Ezek.* 11. 19. So there can be no greater curse laid upon a man, than to have a stony heart (like to *Pharaoh*) which every day doth heap up wrath against the day of wrath, *Exod.* 9.

Use 2. Continuance in sin, most dangerous.

Well, above all things let us beware how we lie and rest in sin. Indeed I confess the Lord might justly condemn

demn us for the leaſt ſin we do commit; but yet he doth not ſo much miſlike us for ſinning, as for lying in ſin without repentance. When we ſin, and lye in ſin, then we wound our conſcience, then all grace will decay; let a man try himſelf. When *David* had done this evil in committing adultery, and murther, and lay without repentance, how was his Zeal quenched? how were his Prayers weakned? how was his Heart cooled? how was his Conſcience wounded? Even ſo, do but try thy heart, if thou *Note.* haſt committed ſome evil, either by adulrery, murther, lying, ſtealing, &c. When thou haſt done this, how untoward and dull ſhall thou be in holy duties, in prayer, and praiſing of God? And thou ſhalt find even a very Hell in thy conſcience for the preſent, and have no power to perform thy duty in thy profeſſion.

Uſe 3. Seeing it is ſo dangerous to lye in ſin without repentance, it is the very cut-throat of the ſoul, and of all good things: O then if we do fall, as the beſt fall daily, yet let us preſently re-

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cover our ſelves, earneſtly repent, and cry out with the prodigal child, *Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and againſt thee.* And with *Peter*, let us haſtily go out, and weep bitterly, and then we ſhall not ſo deeply wound our conſciences, nor draw down God's judgments, as when we lye and ſnort in ſin ſecurely, without repentance. I am perſwaded that many men will not go to Bed, till they have ſummed up their Shop-book, to know what they have taken all the day, and what they have got: And ſhall not man do ſo with God, who is but God's ſteward, caſt up our ſins, and reckon them to the full, what we have the ſame day before omitted and committed? O let us do it, leaſt we be ſnatch'd away ſuddenly by Death, and ſo periſh everlaſtingly. Luk. 15.

The fourth circumſtance in the Title of the Pſalm, is, the occaſion wherefore this worthy Pſalm was penned, which was this; *Nathan*'s reproving of *David* for going in to *Bathſheba*, of which ſtory, read the ſecond of *Samuel*, the eleventh and twelfth

The occaſion wherefore this Pſalm was penned.

twelfth Chapters, and you shall see *David*'s sin, and his repentance, being reproved. Whence, I pray you, mark two things, *David*'s patience, and *Nathan*'s boldness.

David was a mighty King, a famous Warriour; yet, when the Lord's Prophet comes unto him, to reprove him, he takes it patiently, and most meekly endures it. One would have thought, that *David* should have checked him, and bid him hold his peace, and bid him meddle with his equalls. But you see here, though he were reproved by *Nathan*, a poor Prophet of God, and that of a foul sin, he most patiently endures it.

Doct. 5 Ministers must reprove the greatest Personages. 1 Reg. 21. Mar. 6.

Hence we learn, in *Nathan* and *David*, That the Prophets of God must not be afraid to reprove the greatest Personages; but they must lay open their sins, and God's judgments against them. *Elias* reproves *Ahab*, *Moses Pharaoh*, *Paul Felix*, *John Baptist Herod*, *&c.* And so, whosoever thou art, if thou were as great a King as *David*, if the Lord send his Prophet to tell thee of thy sins, thou

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art to take it as the message of the Lord, and not to storm against it. And this is the thing which the Children of God desire, to have their sins laid open, and reproved. *Let the righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me:* For such smiting shall be good for me. And nothing is more dangerous for Kings, and great Personages, than to have their parasits, and flatterers, who will wink at their sins. O how had it been with *David*, if the Lord had not sent *Nathan* to reprove him! Psal. 141. 5.

We learn hence, in what a wofull estate and condition those men and women are in, that wants a faithfull Minister: They live in blindness, and darkness, wanting the ordinary means of Life and Salvation: They have not the words of eternal Life, *Joh. 6. Vers.* 8. which are the power of God to Salvation, *Rom.* 1. 16. and therefore are neer unto Destruction. It was a fearfull word, which Christ said to his Apostles, *Mat.* 10. 5. *Go not ye into the way of the Gentiles, and into the City of the Samaritans, see that ye enter not.*

And to the same purpose the Prophet *Amos* speaketh in his 8 Chap. 11, 12, 13. *Behold, the day is come, (saith the Lord God) that I will send a famine into the Land; not a famine of bread, and a thirst of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord. And they shall wander from Sea to Sea, from the North even unto the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, but shall not find it.*

Oh that we could consider of these things, and lay before our eyes what hunger it is to want the Preaching of the Word, that thereby we might learn to be thankfull for God's mercy towards us, to be moved to pity the desolation of so many of our poor Brethren, as also to fear taking it away from our selves for our unthankfulness. Great are the Plagues, and horrible the ruines of the Church in many places. Oh that we had hearts to mourn for it, and to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest.

Use 2. And surely this is a great plague and judge-

judgment commonly waiting upon great men, that they find few or none that dare admonish them of thei faults, or tell them of their offences; and so many times are suffered to run on still in sin, to their final destruction. And therefore, let us account it as a special blessing sent unto us of God, where we have some godly *Nathans*, by whom we may see what is amiss in us. And *David* said unto *Nathan*, *I have sinned against the Lord.* Now the cause how *David* came to commit this sin, was, by his idleness; for he being upon the top of his House, or Turret, lying on his Couch, and not being employed in the Law of God, nor in the affairs of his Kingdome, then came the Devil, and set his heart, eyes, and thoughts upon vanity, and so he committed this heinous sin of Adultery, in letting open the eyes of his body to his own will and desire. *David* must no more walk upon the top of his Palace, to view his stately City, unless he makes a covenant with his eyes, and shut and keep out those temptations, which at the

first led him to this errour; and which objects are daily offered to our view: For the acts of sin are onely pleasant for the time, and then they vanish away, being rather a burden to us then otherwise. The Devil makes men commit sin, by laying his baits of pleasure in our way, making them sweet to our thinking, when indeed they are bitter and full of thorns. *Nathan* tells him, saying, *Thou art the man.*

We can give such a man thanks that will tell us of some spot in our faces, or blemish in our garments; and shall we envy or maligne him that will discover unto us the spots and blemishes of our souls, which do more soil and defile us, then all the blemishes of the body? And *David*, when he had now found the benefit of a godly reprehension, being reproved by *Nathan* the Lord's Propher, saith, *Psal.* 141. 1. 5. *Let the righteous smite thee, for that is a benefit; let him reprove me, and it shall be a precious Oyl that shall not break mine head.* And to this end speaks *Solomon*, *Prov.* 9. 7. *Rebuke*

not

not a ſcorner, leaſt he hate thee, but rebuke a wiſe man, and he will love thee. The correction of a Friend is as the rod of a Father, the end is not to deſtroy, but to ſave; not to overthrow, but to deliver from death. God hath always his meſſengers in ſtore, to ſend out to his people to have them repent. God ſent *Nathan* to *David*, God ſent *Jonas* to *Niniveh*, God ſent *John the Baptiſt* to the *Jews*; and the firſt words that he ſpake to them, was, *Repent.*

This condemneth the ſpirit of pride in moſt men and women: For in theſe days it is come to paſs, that great Perſonages, if *Nathan* do tell them of their ſins, of their exceſſive ambition, idleneſs, vanities, uncleanneſs, and the like: Oh, theſe hot fellows are not for their humours, they cannot away with them; even as *Herod* in St. *Mark*, *chap.* 6. *v.* 20. Though otherwiſe he did reverence *John*, yet when he came to tell him of his inceſt, and wicked Life, then he muſt loſe his head for it. And as *Ahab* ſaid of *Michajah*, *I hate him, for he never propheſieth good unto me:* He is al-

ways threatning me, and telleth me of my ſins, and God's judgments. So in theſe days, *Nathan* is the odious man of the world; men cannot brook this, to have *Nathan* ſo buſie to meddle with their ſins; but men would fain be ſmoothed, and daubed with untempered morter. But if the Lord loves thee, he will ſend *Nathan* to thee to reprove thee of thy ſins; and if thou canſt not find thy heart willing to hear *Nathan's* reproof, as *David* did, it is becauſe thy heart is nought, and it is a ſign that God will reject thee, and deſtroy thee. *David* did not leſſen or excuſe his ſin, but he preſently confeſſeth them, and humbly begs pardon for his ſins.

Hence we learn, how to eſteem of a faithfull Miniſter, namely, as the ſervant of God; which if it be, then *Moſes* muſt not be murmured at when he ſpeaks freely, and roughly: And if *Michajah* reſolve of faithfulneſs, ſaying, 1 *King.* 22. *As the Lord liveth, whatſoever the Lord ſaith, be it good or evil, that will I ſpeak.* Why ſhould he be hated, and be fed with the bread and

water of affliction? Is it not a reasonable plea, and full of pacification in civil messages? I pray you be not angry with me, I am but a servant. Yet when *Jeremiah* the Prophet shall say, *Of a truth the Lord hath sent me*, *Jer.* 26. 15. his feet shall nevertheless be fastned in the stocks. Nay, this consideration should not only bind men to peace, from touching and doing the Lord's Prophets harm, but also urge them to have them in exceeding honour, at least for the works sake, which is the Lords, who doth acknowledge them co-workers with himself. 1 Cor. 3. 9.

Last of all, this may serve to reprove those that bear the office of *Nathan*, yet have the Word in respect of persons, who dare not do their duties, but are afraid of men's faces: They would be accounted the Embassadours of God, but they are afraid to do their Master's message. Let such learn here of *Nathan*, who feared not the Majesty of a King, but was faithfull in his Office. Let such learn of *John the Baptist*, who

did not ſhrink back, but was bold to tell *Herod*, that it was not lawfull for him to take his Brother's Wife. We muſt not be daſtards, and faint-hearted Souldiers, to fight the Lord's Battel, but firſt be ſure we have a good warrant out of the Word, and then go boldly into the field, and fear not to look the enemy in the face.

We are not our own meſſengers, to do our own Embaſſage, but the Embaſſidours of the eternal God; when he hath once put his Word into our mouths, we muſt go to thoſe that he hath ſent us. And whatſoever he commandeth us, that muſt we ſpeak. *Jer.* 1. 7, 8. When God ſent forth *Jeremy* to preach, he armed him thus; *Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, ſaith the Lord.* Thus he armed *Ezechiel*, *Ezek.* 3. 8, 9. *I have made thy face ſtrong againſt their faces, and thy fore-head hard againſt their fore-heads: I have made thy fore-skin as the Adamant, and harder then flint; fear them not therefore, neither be afraid of their looks, for they are a rebellious houſe.*

Then

Then hence we learn, That the moſt effectual means to pierce and wound men's conſciences for ſin, is, to charge them with their ſpecial ſins, whereof they be guilty; not in general to reprove ſin, but to rip up men's conſciences, to come to particulars, to tell men of their peculiar ſins and impieties, as *Nathan* did to *David*, in the Parable of the Sheep: *Thou art the man that hath done this thing.* Even ſo the woman of *Samaria* did but dally with Chriſt, untill he came to tell her of her ſpecial ſins; namely, That ſhe was a vile, lewd, and wicked woman, no better then a Whore, or a Harlot, and then ſhe was tamed, and began to liſten to Chriſt's doctrine. So here *David* was aſleep in ſin, till *Nathan* came unto him, and told him, *Thou art the man that haſt committed adultery and murther.* And then began *David* to repent, and to beg pardon. So *Judah* could paſs ſentence upon *Thamar*, to be burned for Adultery; but never thought that his ſin had been known; but when he ſaw the ſeal, the cloak, and the ſtaffe, then he can

Doct. 6 Men muſt be charged with their ſpecial ſins.

2 Sam. 1 Joh. 4. 9

Gen. 38

can say, *She is more righteous than I*, when he was thus brought to light, and his sin laid to his charge.

Use 1. This may admonish all Ministers of the Word, that if they desire to convert men, and humble them for their faults, then to rip up men's consciences, to smite them; to press them with their sins, *Thou art the man*. For unless men be thus dealt withall, we see that self-love will cause men to put off one to another: That is a good lesson for such a man, I would he had heard it, and so clear themselves. For as it was with *David*, *Judah*, and the Woman of *Samaria*, till men see their particular sins, as Swearing, Lying, Whoredome, Drunkenness, Ignorance, &c. they will not be humbled.

2 Sam. 12. *Note.*

Gen. 3.

Use 2. If this be the surest and safest way to humble men, to bring them unto true repentance for their sins, then you must be content to have your selves thus dealt withall, to have *Nathan* tell thee, *Thou art the man*: That *John* should tell thee of thy incest and uncleanness, not to storm

against

againſt it, nor to kick againſt the Word. For this know, that if the word of God be not an edged Sword to kill ſin, and cut the throat of it, it will cut the throat of thy ſoul; it will not return in vain. Oh then, would you be ſaved by the Word? then let the Word pierce your hearts, and wound your ſouls. A man that is dangerous ſick, will open his arm, uncover it, let the Chyrurgeon let him blood upon a vein, thank him, and pay him for his pains. Well, our Souls be dangerouſly ſick with ſin, though we know it not, and we have many a deadly wound, though we feel it not: Let us then lay them naked, and ſuffer the Lord's Chyrurgeon, with the ſacrificing Knife of the Word of God, to cut and launch them, if ever we look to be cured. Take heed you be not like unto *Ahad*, or *Herod*, but rather acknowledge it the endleſs mercy of God, which ſends ſome *Nathan* to reprove you, and ſmite you. Alas, men will not endure this to be ſaid, *Thou art the man*, to be told plainly of their ſins;

1 Reg. 22. 3. Mar. 6. Pſ. 141. 5.

sins; but it is the onely way to s men's souls. And the least repe tance is a new Life, and a strict co by circumspection for the time come, desiring the Lord to forgive our manifold sins; which manifold s are great sins.

And therefore, let us all, young a old, rich and poor, noble and s ple, be content to hear of our s and God's judgments against them For, till that message be listned unt there is no message from God of ny pardon to be given, or mercy be shewed, though it were to King: Yet we see, *Nathan* being se from the Lord, doth first his messa of reproof, and heard that listned t before he utter any word of pardo *David's* attention to the words *Nathan*, opened his ears; his inten tion, his heart; and his retention, h mind; as it did *Lydias* at the Preach ing of *Paul*.

When *David* had gone in unt *Bathsheba*: That is, after *David* ha committed that foul and filthy sin o Adultery with *Bathsheba*.

Whence

Whence obſerve the great wiſdom of the Spirit of God, who ſpeaking of a foul and filthy fact, uſes a reverent and chaſt ſpeech, very honeſt and decent. And therefore we learn, That as the Spirit of God ſpeaks, ſo muſt we inure and acquaint our ſelves to ſpeak: Yea, when we are to relate things that are not comely to be ſpoken, to moderate our ſpeech, and to ſpeak in an honeſt and a chaſt manner. So the holy Ghoſt exhorts us, That *our words ſhould be gracious, and powdred with Salt, ſuch as may miniſter grace to the hearers.* But as *for filthy communication, or fooliſh jeſting, which is not comely, let it not be once named amongſt you.*

Doct. 7. Chaſt ſpeeches taught of God.

Col. 4. 6.

Eph. 4. 9.

And this may teach us, that we muſt all diligently ſtudy and practice the government of the tongue, to order it aright in the manner; which is a worthy ſtudy, according to that of the Prophet, *Pſal.* 34. 12, 13. *What man is he that deſires life, and loveth to ſee good days? keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they ſpeak no guile.* And to this purpoſe doth the Prophet

Prophet *David* ſpeaks in another Pſalm, *Pſal.* 39. 1. *I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not with my tongue, I will keep my mouth bridled, while the wicked are in my ſight.* The holy uſe of the Tongue, is the language of *Canaan*, *Eſa.* 18. 19. which we muſt accompt to ſpeak, that it may be ordered according to the Will and Word of God.

Uſe 3. This condemneth the common abuſe of men's Tongues, who do not only grievouſly blaſpheme the name of God in ſwearing, but in moſt vile and filthy barbarous ſpeech, ſuch as would make any chaſt ears to glow for ſhame, ſuch unclean, and polluted words from young and old, even from little Children and Infants, are ſo common, as muſt needs make a chaſt mind to bluſh at them. And how could they do this, but that they hear it of their Elders, Parents, and others? I beſeech you remember *Paul's* words, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.* It is lamentable to hear that I have heard of your Children, moſt miſerable

Ep. 4. 19.

miſerable and curſed oaths, and filthy ſpeeches, even of thoſe (which is ſtrange) that can hardly ſpeak. I pray you for God's ſake look unto it; for if you ſuffer and give them liberty, they will be the cauſe of your woe and end.

Here mark, that *David*, a glorious and renowned King of *Iſrael*, is content to ſhame himſelf for ever, to have his ſins recorded to his own ſhame, ſo that he may procure God's glory, and the good of his Church: For he was confident, that this example of his grievous fall being recorded in God's book, would turn by God's bleſſing to the endleſs comfort and good of his Church. For, what a ſingular comfort is this to God's children, when they ſhall remember, that the falls and ſlips of ſuch worthy men are recorded in God's Book? And if this were not, our faith would fail, and we ſhould even utterly deſpair.

Doct. 8. The godly do reſpect more the glory of God, than their own credit.

And as it was with *David*, ſo it is with all the Godly, if ever they felt the terrour of an accuſing conſcience

ence for ſin, if ever they were diſpleaſed at themſelves for offending a good and gracious God, they will not then ſtick to manifeſt their own ſhame, and proclaim their own folly with grief of heart, with the Leper in the Law, *Levit. chap.* 13. *v.* 45. *I am unclean, I am unclean*, that ſo they may procure their former peace with God, and give him glory by their repentance, as they diſhonoured him by their ſins: So that where the Lord doth awaken the conſcience, all excuſes are ſet aſide; a man is glad to diſburthen himſelf, by confeſſing his ſin unto the Lord Almighty.

We learn by *David*'s example, not to be unwilling to do that which may be for God's glory, and the good of his Church, though it ſhould be to our utter diſgrace in the World; yea, even to ſhame our ſelves for ever, ſo as God may have his honour by us. Alas, we are ſo chary of our own credit, and ſo loath to ſhame our ſelves, that we will not acknowledge our ſins and infirmities, though it might turn much to God's glory: But this

let us know, that it is our duty to seek God's glory, and the good of his Church, though we should even for ever shame our selves to the world. It is a shame to sin, no shame to repent; yea, shame is the best fruit of sin: Neither is our shame encreased by confessing our sins, but rather diminished and taken away. And yet so nice are we, that we are loath to acknowledge our sin, without which there is no pardon of sin. Rom. 6.

From the persons that fell into this great sin of Adultery, namely, *David* and *Bathsheba*; *David*, an excellent King and Prophet of God, *Doct.* 9 The strongest may fall.

yea, a man after God's own heart: And *Bathsheba*, no ordinary person, but a woman of great name, yea, a religious woman, (as it appeareth) wise and discreet. By this we may see, into how great sins the children of God may fall, if the Lord leave them but a little to themselves; as we may behold in *Noah*, *Lot*, *Paul*, *Peter*, and the like. Prov. 31.

Seeing it is so; Oh, how should we watch over our ways? Though thou *Use* 1.

beest

beest the child of God, yet see how thou maist fall, if the Lord leave thee but a while: Oh then, *counter-guard thy heart, &c.* Keep it with watch and ward, and look unto the casements of thy soul, thy ears, and thy eyes; by them was *David* overcome. What folly is it then in them who dare come into any company, that dare pry and look into the beauty of women, as though they were so strong, that they were out of all danger to sin? But, art thou stronger than *David?* if not, thou maist fall.

Pro. 4 23.

Note.

Use 2. Let all Ladies and godly Women take heed, let them look on *Bathsheba*, a worthy Woman, and let them fear to give any entertainment to lust and uncleanness, for they may be sooner overtaken than they are aware of. Look unto thine eyes, and to thy company, least thou be polluted by the society of unchast persons. Yea, it may admonish all men and women, though never so confident, chast, religious, to fear themselves, and to cut off all occasions to uncleanness; as pride in apparel, self-

ſelf-conceit, evil company, idleneſs, and the like, which be fore-goers of this ſin; yet none of theſe ſins go alone, but ſome other ſins do accompany them.

Laſt of all, let no unclean perſon, man or woman, make *David's* nor *Bathſheba's* ſins, a means to embolden them, or bolſter them in uncleanneſs; for, if thou ſin, becauſe ſuch ſinned, thou maiſt periſh in them, like *Pharaoh*, *Corah*, and *Herod*. This is not the end why their faults be noted in the Book of God, for to uphold us in the like; but rather to admoniſh us of our weakneſs, to cauſe us to watch, and be wary leaſt we fall, ſeeing ſuch excellent ones have fallen. *Uſe 3. Note.*

As *David* went from one degree of ſin to another, ſo God went from one degree of puniſhment to another. From ſins of weakneſs, *David* went to the ſin of malice; from the ſin of malice, to the ſin of preſumption. How induſtrious was *David* in ſtudying and deviſing to ſend away *Uriah* with a Commiſſion, to haſten his own innocent Death, the better

to

to hide his Adultery. And therefore, *David* poured out his penitential confession, saying, *Against thee, against thee only have I sinned*: Against thee only; for he was a King (saith St. *Ambrose*) not bound unto Law; because, saith he, Kings are free from the bond of crimes, and are not called unto Punishment by any Law, being safe by the power of Command; therefore *David* sinned not against man, unto whom he was not obnoxious in regard of punishment, but of admonition only and reproof, uttered in the name, and by the authority of God himself. Hereupon the Prophet *Nathan*, having used this preface, (Thus saith the Lord) admonisheth King *David* that he should expiate his sin by repentance; but he gave no sentence against him, whereby, according to the Law, he might be adjudged unto Death: For if *Nathan* had given any such sentence against *David*, he should have power to deprive him of his Life; and so of that which he enjoyed by his Life, his Regal authority,

Apol. *David.* c. 4. l. 2. Epist. 7.

thority, which God onely can take away from Princes, becauſe he alone beſtows it upon them. Oh then, let us imitate *David's* repentance, not his weakneſs. And ſo I come now to the Pſalm it ſelf.

Pſalm 51. Verſ. 1.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindneſs; according to the multitude of thy compaſſions, put away mine iniquities.

NOw follows the Pſalm it ſelf, and it is a moſt excellent Pſalm to be learned of every Chriſtian man and woman, and oft times to be uſed for our comfort; for it contains a moſt earneſt prayer of *David*, that worthy Servant of God, and renowned King of *Iſrael*, a Prophet of God, and a man after his own heart.

Wherein he humbly doth acknowledge his ſins unto the Lord, earneſtly entreating for grace and favour at God's hands, for the true pardon of them all, and to be comforted again by

by the gracious promiſes of God.

This Pſalm may be divided into two parts: In the firſt part, *David* prayeth for himſelf, unto the 18 Verſe. In the ſecond part, he prayeth for the Church of God, that the Lord would be favourable unto *Sion* his Church, and build up *Jeruſalem*.

The main thing which *David* ſo earneſtly, and ſo often prayeth for, is mercy, and favour at God's hands, for the pardon of his ſins, and this Petition is repeated again and again, joyned with great affection, and earneſt deſire of mercy, confeſſing his ſins unfeignedly, and abhorring them.

Secondly, *David* prayeth unto God for the work of Sanctification, that the Lord would purge him, and ſanctifie him by his holy Spirit, and renew his heart.

Thirdly, he promiſeth to preach forth the mercy of God unto others; that his example ſhall be a means, by God's bleſſing, to convert them, to make them afraid of ſin, and to comfort them that be fallen.

Fourth-

Fourthly, he ſhewed the great abuſe of outward Sacrifices, and the outward worſhip and ſervice of God, that if it be done by impure and impenitent ſinners, alas, the Lord takes no pleaſure in it, but hates and abhors it. Eſ. 1. 11.

In the firſt Verſe, we are to conſider; Firſt, what is the thing *David* begs, namely, *mercy*: Secondly, the perſon of whom he begs it, and that is, of God, *Have mercy upon me, O God*: Thirdly, the means and greatneſs of this mercy, *much mercy, and great mercy*, becauſe of his great miſery; and the doubling of this Petition, ſhews, he prayed with great zeal and affection, (*Have mercy on me, O God*) as if he ſhould have ſaid; O my God, I am a moſt vile and miſerable ſinner, I have committed very great and grievous ſins, I ſtand in great need of thy mercy; and therefore have mercy on me in the pardon of my ſins. God's mercy is the girdle of heaven, which binds and lets looſe all the bleſſing which man enjoys on earth: His mercy endures for ever, ſaith the

Pſalmiſt. God's mercy is a ſpring, which will never be dry, a fountain that will always be full; his mercy is over all his works. Mercy is a ſweet thing, it is the Worlds bond, which bears and holds it together, or elſe it would fall into a Chaos, or confuſion. To reckon up all God's mercies, would even fill ſuch a Volume as this themſelves; as likewiſe his loving mercy, his forgiving mercy, his increaſing mercy, his hidden and compaſſionate mercy, his fatherly and affectionate mercy. All theſe mercies of God, be ſhewed to man, even while man is aſleep, and takes his reſt: For, doth not God ſhew his loving, his increaſing, his tender, and fatherly mercies, that while the Husbandman takes his natural repoſe, his corn and other grain encreaſeth, and grows in the ground; and all this is ſtill God's mercy and favour to man, to incite and to invite him only to give him thanks and praiſe; nothing doth God elſe require of man, but only the heart: The firſt fruit of it, which is acknowledgment and confeſſion, that

that he is a God of power, and of mercy, and the Author of all goodneſs. *David* not only praiſeth God himſelf for his mercy, but he calls on others to do the like. *O praiſe ye the Lord, for he is good. O all ye ſaints praiſe his holy name, for his mercy endures from one generation to another.* Firſt, his mercy in creating us. Secondly, his mercy in redeeming us. Thirdly, his mercy in ſanctifying us. Fourthly, his mercy in preſerving us from all dangers of body and ſoul, even to this preſent time.

Doct. 1 Sight of ſin the firſt ſtep to Repentance.

Before a man can either crave for mercy, and beg the pardon of his ſins, he muſt have the ſight of them, he muſt ſee the danger of them, and find himſelf to ſtand in extreme need of God's mercy. *David* had lain a long time in his trangreſſions, and never ſought unto God for mercy; but being awaked by the reprehenſion of *Nathan*, now he cries for mercy, and God did hear him; which, hearing of his requeſt in Heaven, was an act of mercy in God: For, *David* had the wings of Faith, which carried his

petitions to God, and he did believe that God would forgive him; as those that have faith in their prayers, their prayers shall never return without a blessing. The prodigal Son, a true pattern for all sinners, he never seeks to his Father, till he was in extreme misery, and then he saith, *I will go to my Father.* So the proud Pharisee never begg'd for mercy, for he felt no want of it; and the Church of *Laodicea knew not that she was miserable, poor, blind, and naked.* For how can a man repent of that he is ignorant of? Sins committed cannot be repented of, till men see them, and know them; nay, nor barely to know them, but to know the hainousness of them, and the curse of God due unto them; so as a man may take it to heart, and be troubled for his sins. *David*, though a Prophet of the Lord, yet, a man after God's own heart, yet lay a long time in sin without repentance, because he did not weigh and consider with himself what he had done; and therefore in the word of God, the Lord oftentimes calls upon men

Luk. 15.

Rev. 3. 10

men to consider their ways, to know their sins, and the curse of God due into them. *Jer.*3.13. *Know thy sins, O Jerusalem.* Zeph. 2. 1, 2. *Fan your selves.* Lam. 3. 40. *O let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord.*

Here we may see the main cause, why there is so little faith and true repentance in the World, why men are no more humbled for their sins, and do not repent for them; poor souls, they know not that they do evil: They either cannot, or do not search themselves, *Lam.* 3. 40. They never call their hearts to account. Now then, going on in security, seeing and fearing no danger, alas, how should they repent? how should they turn to God? For, if thou couldest see the misery of thy soul, and thy wofull estate by reason of sin; if thou couldest see the number and greatness of thy sins, Oh! thou wouldest even tremble for fear, and wonder at thy wofull estate. But alas, most men are like a man that Travels in the night over a narrow Bridge which is very dangerous, and under it *Use* 1.

runneth a bottomleſs Gulph, ſo as if he fall, he cannot eſcape, but muſt needs periſh, and therefore in the dark night, ſeeing not the danger, he feareth it not: But let him go that way in the morning, he will wonder that ever he was ſo mad and deſperate to go that way, and will never venture that way again. So many poor blind ignorant Souls, when they have run head-long into ſin all their days, and paſſed their uncertain Life in ignorance, prophaneneſs, and manifold ſins, poſting to hell and damnation, not ſeeing the curſe of God that doth hang over their heads, they fear nothing, but run on head-long into all ſin: But if it pleaſe the Lord to open their eyes to ſee their ſins, and the judgments of God due unto them; Oh! they do wonder at their own extreme folly, and God's infinite goodneſs and patience, and would not be in that caſe again for all the world.

Well then, mark this Doctrine, do not lightly paſs it over, but eſteem it as a bleſſed truth of God. Chriſt ſaith, *Luk.* 13. 5. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all*

all periſh. And for a man to be old his ſins, the greatneſs and grievouſneſs of them, it is the firſt ſtep unto repentance. So that we ſee here, who they are that do repent, and ſhall be ſaved; even ſuch as ſee their ſins, and their wofull miſery, and the wretched eſtate wherein they are, and which do moſt earneſtly hunger and thirſt after mercy in Chriſt.

Well then, let me ask thee this queſtion, or rather demand thou it of thine own ſoul: Didſt thou ever ſee thy wofull miſery, that wretched eſtate wherein thou art by reaſon of thy ſin? what a miſerable tranſgreſſour thou art by nature, out of the favour of God, in the ſtate of damnation, in extreme danger for ever to be damned, and to loſe thine own ſoul? Didſt thou ever find thy ſelf to ſtand in need of God's mercy for the pardon of thy ſins, and extreme want of Chriſt's blood to ſave thy ſoul? Haſt thou felt thy heart wounded and bruiſed for thy ſins, that thy ſoul is even ſick with ſin? Didſt thou ever thirſt after God's mercy in

Christ above all the world, so as thou hast with sighs and groans, yea, with tears begged God's mercy on thy knees, as for life and death? *John* he 7 *Chap.* If thou hast not found and felt these things in thee in some measure, thy case is dangerous and fearfull; thou didst never yet truly repent; the mercy of God belongs not unto thee.

Now *David*, he repented presently, at the very instant of time; he did not stand to argue the case, but he confessed his sins, and upon his confession, God's mercy did grow and increase upon him, even as the Husbandman's corn doth grow in the ground when he is asleep: Such was God's love and mercy to *David* upon his humility: And if we will not repent and go to Heaven by example, we must expect to go to Hell with company.

O then, it is a singular favour of God, when he does open a man's eyes to see his misery, to find himself to stand in need of God's mercy, and extreme want of Christ's blood to save his soul: This is the beginning of all grace,

grace, to feel the want of grace. *David*, if the Lord had not rowſed him out of his deadly ſin, wherein he lay a long time, he might have periſhed in it. And therefore, this ſhould teach us all to pray to God, that he would in mercy open our eyes, that we may ſee our ſins, and feel our miſeries, and that we may ſee we ſtand in extreme need of God's mercy. On the contrary, it is a fearfull plague and judgment of God, for men to lye and ſnort in ſin, without remorſe of conſcience, without the ſence and feeling of ſin, or want of mercy. This *David* now knew by wofull experience, that if he had dyed without repentance, he had periſhed. Of all diſeaſes, they be moſt dangerous, which be leaſt felt, as the Lethargy, or dead Palſie, or the like. So it is a moſt fearfull eſtate for any man to lye in ſin without the leaſt feeling of it; for then the heart is hardened, and he makes no account of God's mercy. A man that thinks he is well enough, will ſcorn the Phyſitian. So thoſe blind ſinners, that think they are well enough, and

feel no want of mercy; of all men they are to be pitied; they be in a most dangerous state and condition: And therefore we see it is a great blessing of God, to be told of our sins, to be reproved for them, that so we seeing them, and the danger of them, we may seek to God for mercy. God's mercy was great, saith St. *Augustine*, to the *Israelites*, who gave them a dry and a miraculous passage through the red Sea, in heaping up the waters like walls about them; and at the same time gave their enemies a watry Sepulchre; they were like the Sword-fish, who hath a weapon, but wanted a heart, they could do them no hurt; for God's mercy did defend them, and protect them on all sides. God's mercies are manifold, for God's mercies makes man bold to come unto him: His mercies they are of several kinds; every morning, as I have said, God renews his mercies to man, his mercy whereby he prevents wrath when he is angry with us; then his meeting mercy to a repentant sinner, and his forgiving mercy, and his loving mercy in

in giving us life, food, and raiment. Let us not pry too much into the mercies of God, but let us, as he renews his mercy every day, so let us renew our repentance every day by faith and a new life, every day, and every hour in the day.

Hence we learn, That the first step to heaven, and the beginning of true repentance, is this, for a man to be grieved for his sins, to be wounded in conscience for them; for, till a man see his sins, and feel the burthen of them, and fear the curse of God due unto them, he will never repent and seek the pardon of them. This is that godly sorrow that leadeth to repentance, never to be left nor repented of.

Doct. 2. Sorrow for sin, a note of a godly men.

2 Cor. 7. 10. Mat. 26. Lu. 18. 13.

If this compunction and prick of the heart, be the very beginning of true repentance, and the first step to heaven, and the salvation of a man's own soul, surely then most men be in a miserable and wretched estate, for, most men yet have not set forward one foot, or gone one step to Heaven: For they have never been humbled, never touched, never yet wounded, nor pricked in

Use 1.

Note.

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in heart for their sins, and therefore must needs be in a dangerous estate. Well then, apply this to your selves, didst thou never in all thy Life find thy heart pricked for thy sin? did the sacrificing Knife of the Word never wound thy conscience, nor fetch one tear from thine eyes for thy sin? didst thou never find thy heart to mourn, and to be cast down with remorse of conscience? Certainly thy case is fearfull and dangerous, thou art not yet gone one step to Heaven, nor moved one finger to eternal Life? No, no, thou art yet in thy sins, in extreme danger to be damned. O then, let the Word come home to you, harden not your hearts against it, never be at quiet till you can say, I have felt my soul touched and wounded with the Word of God.

Jam. 2.9.

Use 2. This serveth for the comfort of God's children; for if we find and feel our hearts broken and wounded for sin, so as we mourn for them with a godly sorrow, because they be sins, displease God, offend his Majesty, it is a certain sign we have truly repented,

pented, we are in the ſtate of grace, God's Spirit hath met with us, the Word hath not been in vain in our hearts, but hath wounded ſin, cut the throat of it. Bleſſed be God, if thou canſt ſay by experience, that the Word hath been powerfull to wound thy ſoul, ſo as thy conſcience is truly touched, not only becauſe of God's anger, but becauſe of this, that we have ſinned againſt a mercifull Father. This godly ſorrow ever goes with repentance, not as *Cain*, *Judas*, &c. who deſpaired of God's mercy with a deſperate ſorrow, becauſe of the puniſhment; but when we are wounded with ſin, to mourn for it, becauſe it offendeth God, a loving Father.

Doct. 2. The firſt thing *David* craveth is mercy.

From *David's* prayer and firſt petition, mark what it is he ſo earneſtly craveth; not a Kingdome, nor gold, nor ſilver, nor the life of his enemy, but *mercy*, *mercy* alone; he craveth for nothing but mercy. And therefore in his perſon we learn, what that is which we ſhould moſt deſire above all things in the world, namely, the favour

vour and mercy of God in Christ Jesus; so that if it should be asked, what we would desire in all the world, we should answer, *Mercy*, and the *favour* of God in Jesus Christ. He is a blessed man that hath mercy; let other men desire worldly wealth, riches, honour, gold, silver; but, Lord, I crave nothing but mercy, thy favour and loving countenance. The poor Publican coming to God, he knocks on his breast, and cries for mercy; *God be* Lu.18.13 *merciful to me a sinner.*

For there is nothing in the whole world, that is able to appease the trouble of a wounded conscience, save only the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. *David* no doubt had tossed many thoughts within himself, when he came to utter this which is here mentioned, he had a true sight no doubt, of the misery and wretched estate wherein he stood, by reason of his sin. And had there been any other way in the world to have gotten out of that estate, he would have found it. But mark, he casts his eye only upon the mercy of God, making that his

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surest refuge in this his greatest necessity: Even so, howsoever the opinions of men, as touching happiness, be divers, poor men thinking riches, the prisoner liberty, the sick man health; although these desire all these, yet the sinner ever desireth mercy. This mercy of God, *David*, this sweet singer of *Israel*, had oftentimes sinned, now he desires it. And this is the difference betwixt the godly and the wicked: *Honour me* (saith *Saul*) *before my people. Have mercy upon me* (saith *David*.

Use 1. We learn hence, that nothing can pacifie a wounded conscience, grieved and distressed for sin, but only the mercy and favour of God in Jesus Christ. Men may in all their distresses go to sport and pastime, and merry company. But alas, this is no comfort to a wounded soul, only the mercy of God, and feeling of his love in Christ, can asswage and pacifie the accusing of our consciences. A man in a hot burning Ague may taste of cold water, which may ease him for the present; but alas, after it will increase his

his torment. And as an old sore, if it be not healed at the bottom, though it seem to be sound on the top, yet it will break out again, and become more dangerous and incurable. Even so, when men shall seek to smother the accusation of conscience, to blunt the edge of it, it will after rebound again, and give a deadly wound to desperation.

Nothing can pacifie a wounded conscience but God. Rom. 4. 17.

Dost thou find thy conscience unquiet? Dost thou feel it wound and accuse thee, so that thou canst find no comfort nor rest unto thy soul? There is no other way in the world to pacifie thy conscience, and to have peace, than to intreat and beg for mercy at God's hands. *The kingdome of God stands not in meat and drink, but in righteousnes, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost.* So that although a wicked man enjoy all the world, yet if he have not mercy, and the pardon of his sins, alas, he shall have no sound peace of conscience, no joy in his soul, nor any drop of true comfort: And therefore, let us all seek reconciliation with God, intreat for favour and mercy, and never give any rest unto our souls, till we

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can feel and find our ſelves aſſured of God's mercy in Chriſt, and the pardon of our ſins. If any ſay, O that I could feel this in my ſoul, I have an accuſing conſcience, I feel it terrifie me; I am affraid I ſhall be condemned, I can find no comfort, what ſhall I do? Even as *David* here, beg hard, ſeek earneſtly, for ſo the Lord promiſeth: *If we ſeek, we ſhall find.* And therefore, let us pray, and continue in prayer, and know, that the Lord will in the end, hear, and grant our requeſt.

To whom he directs his prayer.

The ſecond point, is, the party to whom the Prophet directs his prayer, and ſeeketh for comfort; not to any Bald-pate, nor to any Saint or Angel, nor to the Virgin *Mary*; but he goeth to God, prayeth to him, *Have mercy upon me, O God.* And he directs his prayer to the whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; to God the Father, as the Author of all mercy; to Jeſus Chriſt, by whom, and in whoſe name, we obtain mercy; and to the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe he doth teach us to pray, and doth convey and derive all ſaving comfort to us.

Hence

Doct. 4. God alone is to be prayed to. Ro. 10. 14 Dan. 6. Pſ. 2. 7. Lev. 16. 31. Eſ. 8. 19. Eſ. 56. Dan. 9. 17

Hence we learn, to whom we muſt direct all our prayers, namely, to God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, becauſe we muſt pray to him alone, in whom we muſt believe. Secondly, God alone can and will pardon the ſins of thoſe that ſeek unto him for mercy. Thirdly, it is God's Commandement, that we ſhould pray to him, and to no other creature. Fourthly, we have promiſes, that if we pray unto him, he will hear us. Fifthly, we have the examples of all God's Children, who, in all their troubles fought to God alone, and to no other creature in the world, and ſo prevailed. How availeable were the prayers of *Abraham*, being made unto God in Faith, *Gen. chap.* 18. That if ten righteous perſons had been found in *Sodom*, God had ſpared thoſe Cities for their ſakes? How was the Sun and Moon ſtayed by the prayers of *Joſhua*, till he was reveng'd on his enemies? *Joſh. chap.* 10. How did *Elias*, by his prayer, obtain rain, which had been with-held from the earth three years and ſix months? 1 *Reg.* 17. *Ja.* 5. 17. *Act.*

12.

12.1,2. *Job* 5.14. *Dan.*9.17. *Joh.*11.41.

This condemns the blasphemous Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, who teach men to pray unto Saints and Angels, to the Virgin *Mary*, to Stocks and Stones, and I know not what; whereas the Lord saith plainly, *He will give his glory to no creature.* Now, that we may not pray unto them, it is manifest: First, we have no commandement; secondly, no promise; thirdly, no examples of God's children; fourthly, we may not believe in them. *Use* 1. Es. 41. 5. Es.63.10.

Nay, would we not take him to be a foolish Suppliant, that when the King's Son offereth to speak for him to his Father, would refuse to use his Mediation, and go to one of his Servants to intreat for him? is it not meet that such a one should be said nay? Even so, in as much as the Father sendeth us unto his Son, and the Son calleth us unto himself, what madness is it then to run as well from the one as to the other, to go from the Son to the Saints, from him that can help, to them that cannot help, depriving the Father of his honour, the

the Son of his Office, and disgracing the Saints? Away therefore with the mediation of Saints and Angels who know not our hearts, nor hear our prayers. *There is one Mediator betwixt God and man, the man Christ Jesus.* And, 1 *Joh.* 5. 13. *This assurance have we in him, that asking anything according to his will, he heareth us.* Let us tread in the steps of *David*, and *Moses*, and the rest of the servants of God, who ever have in their greatest troubles called upon the name of the Lord. And howsoever Papists or Idolaters will be ready to pretend humility, and they will not be so bold to come to God themselves, but they will use the mediation of such as are about them: Yet, let us know, that *David*, when he came to God, he was as humble as they, and far beyond them; yet his humility did no whit hinder his holy boldness, as to come into God's presence. For our humility doth not appear in shrowding ourselves under the Saints wings, but by humble and hearty confession of our sins unto God.

Let

Let us go unto God in prayer, intreat for mercy at his hands. Let us not go to Saints, or Angels, or any other Creature, save God alone, in the name of Christ Jesus: What Father is more ready and willing to hear his child, then the Lord is, ready and near at hand to hear them that call upon him in truth? Now, that we may pray unto God for mercy, and pardon of our sins, we must be perswaded of two things: First, of the power of God, that he is able: Secondly, of his will, that he is willing to pardon them. The poor *Leper* saith, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* And therefore, that we may pray in faith, and assurance, let us be perswaded of these two: First, that God is Almighty, and is able to pardon all our sins, though never so great. Secondly, that he is most ready and willing, for Christ's sake, (in whose name we come unto him) to pardon our sins: For if we doubt of either of these, we cannot pray in faith, and so shall not obtain that we desire. Mat. 8.2.

Seeing

Use 3.

Seeing *David* prayeth for pardon of sin, and craves it only at God's hands, we see, that it is a cursed and blasphemous Doctrine of the Papists, who hold, that their Head, the Pope, can pardon sin; yea, not only give a man pardon for his sins past, but (for mony) can pardon and seal him a pardon of sins many years to come. A most blasphemous Doctrine, and that which opens a gap to all sin, when a man shall have promise of pardon for sins to come. But we see here, that the word of God speaks clean contrary, namely, that God alone can pardon sins: *For who can forgive sins save God only?* And where did we ever find, that God did pardon a man's sins for time to come: but rather threatneth sinners with judgment, to make them beware of sin. So that we see that the Pope is Antichrist, who setteth himself in the seat of God, and exalts himself above God, in that he takes upon him that God never did, to give a man pardon for his sins, before they be committed.

The Pope cannot forgive sins.

Luk. 5. 21.

2 Thes. 2. 4.

After

After thy loving kindness, &c.

David being dismayed, and cast down in the sense of his misery, doth look up to God for mercy, and is emboldened thereby to draw neerer unto him, and with some comfort call upon him for mercy.

Whence we learn first of all this Doctrine, That the experience of Almight God's former favour, casteth off fear, and causeth affiance in God, and is one of the chiefest causes to move us still to trust in him, as *Ps.* 4. *Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness, for thou hast set me at liberty when I was in trouble, have mercy therefore upon me, and hearken to my prayer.* Where the Prophet reasoneth from the time past, to the time to come, and intreateth God to hear him now, because he had already shewed mercy on him. The like we may see, *Ps.* 22. *Thou didst draw me out of the Womb, &c.* Out of which words we gather, that the Propher, for benefits past, assureth himself of deliverance from dangers present. The like of the Lion, and the Bear, 1 *Sam.* 17. 4. *Ps.* 34. 7.

Doct. 5. Experience of former favour, assureth of future favour.

We

Use 1. We learn hence, to acknowledge his great mercy; that maketh one mercy the seal of another, and one grace the pawn of another. Now, what man or woman hath not received thousands and ten thousands of mercies from the God of mercy? All which may be so many comforts unto his soul, to assure him, that God will never forsake him. Indeed, if our own works or righteousness, were the only ground to move the Lord to take pity on us, then we should be much discouraged in our selves, when we look back unto our Lives: But now the former mercies of God are arguments of further mercies, to assure us that he will add mercy to mercy. Whereby we may see how fruitful the loving kindness of the Lord is always producing more, as one grain of Corn increaseth an hundred fold.

Use 2. Again, we learn hence a notable difference between God and man in bestowing benefits; men are quickly weary of their liberality, but it is not so with God; the more he

we are in asking, the more bountifull he is in giving; which is a comfort to all weak Christians, and wounded Souls, who are ever ready to reason thus within themselves: Will God hear me, or respect me? will he shew his loving kindness towards me a wretched sinner? Yea, God doth hear thee, and respect thee, and will shew mercy unto thee, if thou seek unto him in faith; yea, the oftner we ask, the better we are accepted of God; the more we desire, the more we obtain. He chargeth us, *Psal.* 50. 15. *To call on him in the day of trouble*, and assureth us of our deliverance, *Jam.* 1. 5, 6.

Doct. 6. The mercy of God emboldens sinners to come unto him.

Hence mark what is that, whereby poor distressed souls, thrown down for sin, wounded and melting for sin, and almost in the gulph of desperation, (as *David* was) that gives them courage, and emboldens them to come into the presence of God, to stand before their Judge; namely this, the endless love and mercy of God in Jesus Christ, even the consideration of God's mercy, that he is most ready

to pardon and forgive poor sinners, to receive them to mercy; for so long as the conscience accuses for sin, and terrifies a poor sinner, he doth nothing but fly from God, run from him, dares not look unto him, nor call upon him, till he conceive of God's mercy in Christ, that he is most willing to pardon those which do truly repent.

Ps. 103. 8.

Now, that God is merciful and ready to pardon poor sinners, and to receive them to mercy, it doth appear by that his loving invitation, *Matth. Chap.* 11. *v.* 28. *Come unto me all ye that travel, and are heavy laden, and I will ease you.* Likewise he embraceth the poor and simple as lovingly and cheerfully, as the rich and wise of the world. Publicans and sinners are accepted of him, who were contemned of the *Jews*. The woman taken in Adultery, is exhorted by him to repentance: The blind man restored to his sight, and cast out of the Synagogue, is sought out by Christ, and taught to believe, *Joh.* 9. 35. The penitent Thief is by him converted

to

to the faith, *Luke* 23. according to that, *Mat.* 18. 14. *It is not the will of God that one of these little ones should perish.* The like we may say of *Mary Magdalen*, who was infamous in life, out of whom Christ cast seven Devils; of the *Canaanitish woman*, whom he heard and helped; of the Cripple that lay at the Pool, whom, when Jesus found in the Temple, *Joh.* 5. he exhorted to sin no more, according to that of the Evangelist, *Matth.* 11. That, by the power and love of Christ, the Blind had their sight restored, the Lepers were cleansed, the Dead were raised, the Lame walked, the Sick were healed, and the Poor received the Gospel.

Seeing a poor sinner will never fly to God for mercy, untill he be perswaded of the favour and mercy of God in Christ, and can perswade himself that God is most mercifull and willing to pardon them. We must remember ever with the one eye, to look unto his Justice, that he is a holy and just God, most righteous, and one that cannot bear with sin and

sinners, that live and delight in sin: So with the other eye, we must look unto his endless mercy in Christ Jesus, fix our eyes upon that, and rely on that; otherwise alas, we should be so far from seeking unto him, that we shall most willingly fly from his presence, as a terrible and angry God, and most righteous Judge. And therefore, as we must needs behold him as a just God, and righteous to punish sin; so we must labour to be perswaded of his mercy, that he is most ready to pardon, full of compassion, that so by Jesus Christ we may have access unto the Throne of grace, and enter with boldness into his presence. And because, that Christ Jesus is the *Way*, the *Truth*, and *Life*, let us never go without him in the arms of our faith, and in his Name beg for mercy; for without him we can find no mercy, but judgment.

Eph. 3. 11. 1 Joh. 2. 1

Use 2. Cause of man's despair.

We see hence the very cause why so many come to despair, and so to cast away their own souls; namely, 'cause they cannot conceive that God hath any mercy for them: They cannot

not to be perſwaded of God's endleſs mercy in Chriſt Jeſus; but when they conſciences do accuſe them of their ſins, they preſently ſee that God is angry with them, that he is a righteous Judge, an angry and terrible God againſt ſinners: And thus, ſeeing his juſtice and anger againſt ſin, they dare not appear in his preſence, but fly from him, as *Adam* did in the Garden, and could wiſh that they might never come into his preſence: They cannot for their lives behold the mercy of God in Chriſt. Impenitent ſinners cannot call God Father, they cannot endure God's angry countenance, but rather wiſh they were out of the world, and might never come before his face: For this is certain, that, unleſs a poor ſinner, and diſtreſſed ſoul, can together with the ſenſe of ſin, and God's anger againſt ſin, behold, and acknowledge the endleſs mercy of God to pardon them, he never will dare to appear in his preſence, but God's anger will over-whelm him. Well then, let us with *David* ſo behold and feel

the anger of God for our sins, to humble us, that we never despair of God's mercy, but still know and believe, that God is no less infinitely mercifull, if we can repent, to pardon and forgive us, than he is infinitely just to punish, if we will not repent.

Doct. 7. God's mercy, man's merit.

Mark how *David*, a man after God's own heart, intreats the Lord to pardon his sins for his mercies sake: Therefrom we learn, That there is no other cause to move the Lord to pity, and pardon us our sins, but only his most free, and undeserved mercy: There is no work, nor goodness, or virtue in any man, to move the Lord to pity, and pardon us, but all this is of his meer bounty, goodness, and mercy, without all merits of ours. As what could the Lord see in *Saul*, in *Rahab*, in *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom were cast seven Devils, to move him to mercy, but his tender mercy alone? Even so, all the gifts and graces of God's Spirit, bestowed upon his servants, either concerning this Life, or that which is to come: They all proceed from the free grace and mercy of God

Act. 6. Luk. 7.

God in Jesus Christ, according to that of the Apostle, *Rom.* 6. 23. *Eternal life is the free gift of God.* This is confirmed by the practice of godly *Daniel*, *Dan.* 9.7,8,9. *O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us shame; because we have sinned against thee.* Whereby we gather, that though our prayers be not without effect, yet they prevail not with God by virtue of any excellency that is in them, but because God hath promised to be found of them that seek him in the means he hath appointed. And so for the rest of God's Ordinances, Word, Sacraments, &c. the Lord doth accept them, and is well pleased in them; howbeit, not through our worthiness that perform them, but for his goodness sake that doth command them: For these properties are to be found in works that are meritorious.

First, they must be done by a man's own self, and from himself; but we have nothing of our own to give unto God: *For what hast thou, that thou hast not received?* 1 *Cor.* 4.7. without

him we can do nothing: It is he that must work in us the will and the deed.

Secondly, they must be such works as are not due unto him, they must not be due debt, but proceed from our own free will, even such as God cannot justly challenge at our hands. But whatsoever we do, we do it of debt and duty; yea, *Luk.* 17. 10. *When we have done all things that are commanded us, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.*

Thirdly, the works we do, must be done for the profit of him, from whom we look for a reward. But, *Psal.* 16. *All our godliness cannot reach unto the Lord.* We may benefit man, but we cannot benefit our Maker; therefore, it is plain, we cannot merit.

Fourthly, the work and the reward must be in proportion equal, for if the reward be more than the work, it is not a reward of desert, but a gift of good will. But, *Rom.* 8. *The afflictions of this present time are not worthy of the glory that shall be shewed unto us.* So then, they are not deserved of us, but are bestowed on us. This

This condemns the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, who teach, that God doth shew mercy on some men, because they be worthy of it for their good works, and honest life; and therefore, they can dispose themselves by virtue of their free will, to move the Lord to have mercy upon them. But we ascribe all to grace, and meer mercy; and therefore, seeing pardon of sins comes from the meer mercy and love of God in Christ, we must ascribe all the praise of it to God alone: Pardon of sins, grace to repent, life eternal, all these come from the meer mercy and love of God in Christ Jesus. And therefore, let us ascribe nothing to our own goodness, or virtue to our own wit, or reason; but give all the glory and praise to God alone. Eph. 2. 8.

According unto the multitude of thy compassions, put away mine iniquities.

As if *David* should have said, Oh, Lord, my sins are many, and great, and therefore I stand in need of thy mercy for my misery, and of the multitude of thy compassions,

for pardon of all my offences.

Doct. 8. The nature of sin.

When as *David* prayeth for the multitude of mercies, for the pardon of his sins; We learn hence, what an hainous and horrible thing sin is in God's sight, that it cannot be pardoned without a multitude of mercies: Sin being committed against an infinite God, deserves infinite and endless punishment of soul and body; and before it can be pardoned, must have infinite mercy.

Sin is odious in it self, and maketh us vile and abominable in the sight of God, *Jer.*5.25. *Is.*59.1,2,3. *Keeping all good things from us, and pulling down all evil upon us, and that the wages thereof is death, being able to press us down even to the bottom of hell.* It is sin that makes us execrable to the Lord, and abominable in his sight; yea, nothing doth more deform us, and make us cursed and detestable in the sight of God, than sin; the pardon whereof, must have infinite mercy.

Use 1.

Then hence we learn, that we never esteem rightly of sin, till we come to be grieved for it, as that we find our

our ſelves to ſtand in great need of God's mercy for the pardon of it, yea, of a multitude of mercies, of a Sea of mercies, till we find that we ſtand in need of every drop of Chriſt's blood to ſave our ſouls. *David* having ſinned, begs for a multitude of mercies; and ſo we ſhall find, that if we truly repent of ſin, that we ſtand in need of a Sea of mercy, and of every drop of Chriſt's blood.

Uſe 2. This condemneth moſt men and women, who are ſo far from eſteeming thus of ſin, that they make no bones of great ſins, and many grievous impieties; yea, they make a ſport of ſin: Swearing, lying, drunkenneſs, whoredom, pride, covetouſneſs, &c. and give them names of virtue. We ſee it is too too common, that men think they ſtand in no need of God's mercy, they think, that *Lord have mercy upon me*, will ſerve. But if we will judge of ſin as we ought, we ſhall find, that we ſtand in need of a Sea of mercy, in regard of the multitude of our ſins.

God, a God of mercy. Pſ. 11. 9.

We ſee, that the Lord is full of mercy, full of pity and compaſſion, and his mercies

mercies are over all his works. And indeed, his mercies are great: First, because they come from an infinite God, to men who are infinitely evil, and deserve no mercy but judgment. Secondly, because for time they last for ever, and never have end. Thirdly, because the mercy of God concerns Salvation, Life eternal, &c.

And this is that which the Lord himself proclaimeth from Heaven, *Ex.*34.6. *The Lord is strong, merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness, and truth; reserving mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.* Again, *Mich.*7.18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that takest away inquity, and passest by transgressions? He retains not wrath for ever, because mercy pleaseth him; he will turn again and have compassion upon us, he will subdue all our iniquities, and cast all our sins into the bottom of the Sea. Is.*55.9. *Ez.*33.11. Though our sins be great, yet great is the mercy of God in pardoning. *Rom.*5.20. *Where sin doth abound, there grace doth superabound.* Wherefore, let no sin so dis-

may

may us, as to cast us down to despair; let this cheer us, that God is gracious.

Seeing the Lord's mercy is a bottomless Sea, that cannot be drawn dry, *His compassions fail not.* Hence is matter of great comfort to all true penitent sinners: For thy sins cannot be so many, and so great, but if thou hast grace to repent, God is able and willing to pardon them all. *Use* 1. Lam. 3.

If thou say, Oh my sins are great, grievous, monstrous, unspeakable; Well, the mercy of God is greater, as may appear in the pardon of *Lot's* sins, *Davids*, *Peters*, *Pauls*, *Rahabs*, *&c.* if thou canst repent, and truly turn to God. If thou say, Oh! they are more than the stars in number, remember that God's mercy is a bottomless Sea; he hath a multitude of compassions, and can pardon them, though never so many and grievous. If thou say, Oh! I have lived a long time in them, twenty, thirty, forty years; look on God's mercy shewed to *Mary Magdalen*, *Paul*, and others, that had lived long in sin; so that if a man have grace to repent, neither the great- Gen. 19. 2 Sam. 12. Act. 9. Josh. 2.

greatneſs, nor the multitude, nor the continuance of his ſins, none of all theſe can hinder God's mercy; but here is all, that men muſt repent: Otherwiſe, if men do not repent, the leaſt ſin is damnable; and if men do repent, no ſin is ſo great, but it is pardonable.

The mercies of God belong not to all.

Yet notwithſtanding, men muſt take heed, that they take not occaſion to live in ſin, becauſe God is mercifull, and theſe things are noted as a comfort for thoſe that ſigh and groan under the burthen of their ſins, to comfort them, and to keep them from deſpair, that if they be truly humbled for their ſins, there is yet with the Lord mercy in ſtore, whereby they may be ſaved.

Uſe 1. Seeing all God's gifts come from him to us of grace and mercy, even becauſe he is full of mercy, and hath even a multitude of mercies for poor penitent ſinners that ſue to him for mercy: We learn, above all things in the world, to deſire mercy, and the pardon of our ſins. This we ſee in the Prophet *David*, *My ſoul is ſore troubled*

troubled, but, Lord, how long wilt thou delay? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul, save me for thy mercies sake. This is also practised by the Church: *It is the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* Thus the godly, when they desire any blessing, they crave it of favour: If they crave to have any judgment removed, they crave it of mercy, esteeming his mercy above all the World, or ought else they can desire: Therefore above all things in the world, for the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, use all good means to obtain it; imploy thy self diligently to keep it, and to continue it towards thee, that in thy Life it may be well with thee, and in Death it may not depart from thee.

Pl. 6. 6. Pl. 63. 3. Lam. 3.

Lastly, where the Prophet *David* saith, *according to the multitude of thy compassion, blot out mine offences*: Mark that, the word (*blot out*) is Metaphor taken from writing Tables, when a man shall wipe out with a Spunge all that is written; or, from crossing of Books of Records, Books of Debts, &c. And

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Lastly, where the Prophet *David* saith, *according to the multitude of thy compassion, blot out mine offences*: Mark that, the word (*blot out*) is Metaphor taken from wiping Tables, when a man shall wipe out with a Spunge all that is written; or, from crossing of Books of Records, Books of Debts, &c. And

And it is all one, as if *David* should have said, O Lord, I have run very far upon thy score, I have even filled thy Book, not with small, but great sums of debt; pay I am not able, no, not one farthing. Now, Lord, I beseech thee therefore, deface, cross, and blot out altogether the debt of my sins.

Doct. 10 The Lord keeps a Book of our sins.

Hence we learn, That all our sins are recorded in the Lord's Book: He keeps a Bill of account, all our very thoughts, words, and deeds are known unto him; he keeps them in mind, and memory, and hath them written down: And, unless we repepent of them, and they be blotted out with the blood of Christ, laid hold on by faith, the Lord will call them all to account at the day of Judgment: *The books shall then be opened*, and every sin, old, new, secret, open, against God and man, shall be brought to light, for they be recorded in God's book.

Rev. 20. 12.

Now by these Books we may not understand material books, in which men write down such things as

as they would have remembred, for God cannot be said to stand in need of any such helps; but because all things are as certain and manifest unto him, as if he had his Register in Heaven to keep account thereof, *Psal.* 139. 16. *Dan.* 7.18. *Phil.* 4.3.

So then we may see, that the Lord doth keep a note of all our sins, and chalk them as it were upon a score, untill payment come. It is not with God as it is with Princes, who are ignorant of Treasons plotted against them; but all things, both past, present, and to come, are known to him, as well our rebellious thoughts, as sinful acts committed. And although we do forget, and carelesly mind what we have done, yet God forgets nothing, every part and parcel of our debt, being noted exactly in his book of remembrance.

Seeing all our sins be known to God, he notes them down in his book of account, and not one sin can pass him, but he writes it down: How should this make us all carefull unto our lives, that we commit no sin? For if we

we do, the Lord knows it, and notes it in his book, and unless he blot them out, they shall all come to account.

A wicked man, and an unchast woman, how many thousand vile and filthy thoughts have they in their minds night and day? Their hearts burn in lust and uncleanness, and these they pass over, regarding them not, making little or no account of them. But alas, the Lord hath them all written in the book of his remembrance, and if thou repent not of them, and leave them; Oh woe to thy soul, when this book comes to be opened, and read over, and when thou shalt receive *according to thy works*. *Job* saith, *Thou hast sealed up our sins in a bag*. To seal up a thing, doth note an exact kind of keeping it. So then, the bag and bundle of our sins being sealed up, and that by God himself, let us not imagine, that any one can drop out, but all shall come to judgment.

Use 2 Seeing all our sins are as so many debts, set down in God's book, and we must come to a reckoning one day; how

how should we labour all the days of our Life to have them blotted out, to have this Book cancelled and crossed even by the fingers of God? For, indeed we may run on still in God's debt, and set on apace upon his score; but we cannot so fast wipe them out again: Nay, we can never of our selves pay one farthing, or satisfie the least of our debts we owe unto him. It is God that hath written down, that must freely forgive and cancell, as himself telleth us, *Isa.* 43. 25. *I, even I am he, saith the Lord, that putteth away thine iniquities.* Now, that they may be blotted out, and this Book may be cancelled, we must,

How to have the Books cancelled.

Firſt, truly repent of them all, bewail them, be grieved for them; that, by them we have grieved God.

Secondly, we must beg hard, even as for life and death, for pardon of them, as *David* did here, again, and again ask mercy. If a man should run into Debt a thousand pounds, and know not how to pay his creditor, his best way were to seek and make friends unto him for to forgive it.

We

We are debtors to God, thousand thousand sins, pay we cannot, then let us confess the debt, intreat him to blot his book, and take that hand writing, and bond of obligation against us, and nail it to Christ's cross. And this is an excellent property of the child of God, that he desireth (after a sort) to come out of God's debt. A true child of God cannot abide to have any thing standing on God's score, for he knows, *Heb.* 10. 31. *That it is a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God:* So long to defer, till God warn to his Bar. Oh then, seek betimes, and give the Lord no rest till the Debt be pardoned.

Thirdly, that our sins may be clean blotted out, we must have faith in Christ Jesus, for nothing can blot our sins, but his blood alone; nothing in heaven and earth can satisfie God's anger, wash away sin, blot out our offences, but only the blood of Jesus Christ. And therefore, let us labour continually, to be assured of it by faith, to sprinkle our sinfull hearts with the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

1 Joh. 1. 7
Rev. 1. 9.

See-

Use 3.

Seeing the Prophet *David* doth acknowledge, that this debt was more than he was able to pay, and therefore disclaiming his own sufficiency, appeals only to God's mercy in Christ, for the pardon of the same. We learn, the Doctrine of Merits, yea, and Supererogation, now taught in the Church of *Rome*, is most false, and erroneous, teaching poor people to lean unto Man's satisfactions, which they must make unto God, either here, or in Purgatory: Whereas, the Justice of God is infinite; and when we have done all we can here in this life, we are unprofitable servants. Nay, there is not that man in the whole world, that if God should lay aside his mercy, and deal in justice, were able to satisfie the wrath of God for the least debt that he doth owe unto God. And unless the Lord take pity on us, and forgive the debt, there remaineth nothing for us, but to lye in prison, *Mat.* 28. 27. and that for ever. *David*'s eyes did gush out with tears, when he did see other men sin; and surely, my beloved, his eyes did shed

a fountain of tears, when he had committed that act of folly with *Bathsheba*, he little thought or feared that he had committed adultery: This act of his was his blindness, and security at that time. When we lye on our sick beds, our consciences shall witness against us; nay, our pillows will testifie, that they are stuffed full of Bonds and Bills, our bolsters with Forfeitures and Morgages, our beds full of bags of Gold, gotten by extortion and usury, our curtains hang about us with nothing but Indentures and Adventures. And do we think, that a sum of mony given to the poor, or to some charitable uses when we die, will serve the turn to take away or lessen our sins; or that a few mourning Gowns left in the Will, to be given to the needy, will hide these black deeds, or make our spotted and sinfull souls white? No, it will not. If we would have our sins remitted, and go to heaven, we must, First, confess our faults: Secondly, repent us of our sins; and then, Thirdly, give satisfaction for the wrong we

we have done to those parties which we have injured: This is the way to go to heaven, and best pleasing to God.

Take this example of *David*, when he was told by *Nathan*, of a certain rich man, which had taken away a poor man's Lamb, which was all he had; and such a Lamb as he nourished in his own bosom, and brought up at his own Table: *David* hearing this, said, *The man that hath done this, shall surely restore four-fold.* This was *David's* will, restauration to be made to the party wronged. The like of *Zacheus, Behold Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wrong'd any man, I will restore four-fold.*

So it must be with that man, if ever he mean to enjoy Heaven: First, to make his peace with GOD, then after be reconciled to his Brother; not in bare words only, but in real actions: And so by this means you will hide and cover a multitude of sins. Strive thus with thy self, and thou shalt thereby gain thee a quiet Conscience, both towards thy God, and also towards man.

Psalm

Psalm 51. Vers. 2.

Wash me throughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sins.

IN this Verse, the Prophet *David* proceeds with his former petition unto God for grace and favour, for pardon of his sins; yet so, as he doth it more effectually, and more earnestly, because his soul was now exceedingly grieved, seeing his wofull misery that he was in, how foul and filthy he was, stained with sin most hainously. And though some put a difference between these two speeches, and understand the former of the washing of Justification, and pardon of sins, not imputing them unto his charge: And the second of the washing of Sanctification, and the curing of our sins; yea, by little and little washing and purging them away, and more and more renewing of us in soul and body, by the work of Sanctification: Yet many think the words do both imply one thing, namely, to be throughly purged

purged from the filth and ſtain of Original and natural ſin, and to be received again into the favour of God, by the means of Chriſt.

It may ſeem ſtrange what ſhould move *David* to confeſs his ſin, and to intreat for pardon in this manner. There was no Court of Inquiſition concerning this fact; there was no Magiſtrate to examine him, nor Judge to condemn him, he being a King: Nay, no doubt the Devil might ſet ſome on work, which might back him, and ſeem to leſſen his fault. What then ſhould cauſe *David*, without any regard of his credit, to come forth in this manner, and thus publickly to confeſs his pollution, and to be ſo earneſt unto God, with his *have mercy, blot out, waſh me, &c?* Surely it was his own conſcience; and that extorted and wrung from him this confeſſion, and made him ſo earneſt unto God in prayer, ſaying, *O Lord, take from me thy ſcourge and plague.*

Doct. 1. A wounded conſcience can find no reſt, but only in Chriſt.

From this prayer of *David*, repeating his requeſt to God ſo often: *Have mercy, blot out, waſh me, &c.* We learn, that

that a wounded conſcience, that is truly touched for ſin, can find no reſt or comfort, but only in the feeling of God's mercy in Chriſt for the pardon of ſin. And therefore *David*, to ſhew how he was truly humbled and wounded for ſin, he never can content himſelf to pray and beg for mercy and pardon. For after a man ſees his ſins, and the filthineſs of them, and beholds the wrath of God againſt ſin, his conſcience ſtill accuſeth him, neither can he find any reſt, till he do feel the mercy of God in Chriſt for the pardon of them. *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God.* Again, *The kingdome of God ſtands not in meat, and drink, but in righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghoſt:* That is, in the pardon of ſins, and feeling of God's love; for ſin once known will never ceaſe to accuſe, untill it be pardoned.

Rom. 14. 17.
Rom. 5. 1.

And this is confirmed unto us by the example of *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. who having ſlain his own brother, and ſhed innocent blood, which cried in the ears of the Lord for vengeance:

How

How did the Lord ſtrike him with an accuſing conſcience, that he feared the ſight of every creature, when he had once attained the ſight of his ſin? And whereas he thought to build him a City, to yield him comfort and ſafety; even there did the juſtice of God overtake him, and he was driven from his enterpriſe. The like we may ſee in *Belſhazzar*, *Dan.* 5. 6. when there appeared fingers of a man's hand upon the wall, his thoughts were troubled, and his knees ſmote one againſt the other. According to that puniſhment, the Lord foretold; *Levit.* 26. *I will ſend even a faintneſs into their hearts; and the ſound of a leaf ſhaken, ſhall chaſe them; and they ſhall fly as from a Sword, though none purſue them.* So, that if it were poſſible to eſcape all apprehenſion, and accuſation in the world; yet, a man's own conſcience would arreſt, and condemn him, even hale him unto judgment.

Seeing this is the nature of ſin, that being known, it will never ceaſe to accuſe, and vex the conſcience of a

poor ſinner, till it be pardoned; it ſhould provoke us all that feel the ſmart of ſin, never to give the Lord any reſt, untill we have pardon granted: But as *David* did here, pray again and again for mercy and favour, and reconciliation with God, and never leave the Lord till we obtain mercy and favour, and till we have got ſome comfortable perſwaſion of God's love in Chriſt for the pardon of our ſins, for till we do ſo, we ſhall never have peace, nor quietneſs of conſcience; we ſhall never have ſound comfort and joy in God's Spirit, but ever anguiſh, and doleur, ſorrow, and heavineſs; yea, either we ſhall grow blockiſh, and ſenſeleſs, or elſe in the end come to extreme deſperation. And therefore let us labour with the Lord, ply him with prayers and tears for pardon, and never let him have reſt, till we get one drop of mercy for the pardon of our ſins.

Uſe 2. Here we are admoniſhed not to flatter our ſelves in our ſins, as though no body ſaw us; as it is the manner of wicked men to ſay, *Eccl.* 23. *Who ſeeth*

seeth me? I am compassed about with darkness, the walls hide me, no body seeth me, whom need I fear? And indeed, there is scarce one of a thousand that makes any conscience of sin, so that the world do not take notice of it to condemn him. But let us not deceive our selves; though we think our selves never so secret, committing Adultery under a Canopy, or in the dark, yet our own Consciences will reply; I see thee, and I will accuse thee: And then, what is man the better for having no body private to his sins, when he hath a conscience within him, which dogs him up and down in every corner, giving him no rest?

Use 3. This shews the madness of carnal men, when they feel the burthen of sin pressing them, and their consciences accusing them: What, do they run to God, and seek him? No, no, their run to their sports and pastimes, to Cards and Tables, to the Tavern and Ale-house, and merry company, and thus they think to put off the sence of sin, and to smother and stop the mouth of

their accusing consciences.

Doct. 2 Difference between the sorrow of the godly and the wicked.

Mark the thing which thus grieved *David's* spirit, and vexed his mind; namely, his sins and impieties, his filthy sins, whereby he had grieved his good God, and loving Father. He did not so much fear punishment, as this, to offend his mercifull and gracious God. Therefore let us with *David*, look back upon our Idolatry, look back upon our Whoredome, and Drunkenness, and then we shall jump with God, and say, that we have had no hard measure, when we are punished by any affliction, whatsoever shall happen in this Life. If the Lord had not sent *Nathan* to *David*, to tell him how he had sinned, what would have been become of him? For *David* was in security, and as it were, dead in sins and trespasses; but it was God's great mercy in calling him back. Punishment and affliction cannot come of it self; it was *David's* sin which caused threescore and ten thousand to dye of the Plague. Can a stone fly in the air, without the hand that flings it? Or can a stone be removed without

out help? No more can sin be removed, or our conscience quiet, without our confession and repentance. Repentance must first be inward, and from the heart, in sorrowing, weeping, and lamenting for what hath been done amiss in thought, word, and deed; and labour to sin no more. Repentance is better for the conscience of man, than cloaths be for his back; for repentance brings forgiveness of our sins, which otherwise would confound us; it brings us comfort to our consciences, which otherwise would be afflicted; and shall in the end partake of that joy which is unspeakable. Saint *Paul* said, and confessed, it was not he, but it was sin that reigned in his mortal body, which kept him from repentance, and from the knowledge of Christ, so long as it did. And though sin dwell in us by nature, let us desire and pray to the Lord, that sin may not destroy us for our natural corruptions: For as the soul is placed in the body, so is grace in the soul of every true repentant; and though we have

Rom. 7. 10.

mountains of ſins, ready to deſtroy us; yet, let them not make us deſpair, or hinder us from calling upon the Lord for mercy, whoſe mercy is over all his works. True it is, that the abundance of our ſins, and the clog of our own corrupt affections, leads us out of the way which guides us to happineſs. And though our miſdeeds be works of darkneſs, yet there is the window of God's grace to give us light, and inſight of our ſins, which we have committed. Therefore, O Lord, ſuffer *Grace* to dwell and inhabit in our bodies, while we live here in this life, that hereafter we may live with thee in glory for ever.

Hence then, mark the difference of God's children, and the wicked, in repentance; the child of God is ſorry for ſin, becauſe it is ſin, becauſe it offends God, and diſpleaſeth him, and not ſo much properly for the puniſhment; (yea, though there were none) yet he would fear to offend, and be grieved for ſin, becauſe it is ſin, and it breaks God's commandements. This we may

behold

behold in *David*, when he had committed those great sins of adultery and murder, and was reproved for them by *Nathan* the Lord's Propher, 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. He confesseth wi h grief and anguish of heart in this Psalm, *ver.* 4. *I have sinned against thee, even against thee.* All the judgments which *Nathan* threatned against him from the Lord, did not so much wound him as this, that he had dishonoured his God. And when he had numbered his people, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. his heart smote him, and he cried out, *I have sinned exceedingly, in that I have done.* The Pestilence did not so much trouble him, as his pride against God. And the Apostle *Peter*, *Mat.* 26. 75. seeing how grievously he had sinned, in deny ing his Master, *Went out and wept bitterly.* If there had been neither heaven nor hell, neither reward nor punishment, yet this unthankfulness of his towards so kind a Master, would have caused *Peter* to have sorrowed so much as he did. And when this godly sorrow is once wrought in man's heart, then he beginneth to repent, and neve-

before; the like we may behold in *Abraham*, in *Job*, in *Joseph*, &c. *Gen.* 18. 30. *Gen.* 39. 9.

But wicked men, they are grieved for sin, not because it is sin, and the breach of God's Law; but for fear of punishment. *Pharaoh* intreated *Moses* to pray for him, that the judgement might be removed; but still he loved his sin. So *Saul* prayed *Samuel* to pray for him, and to honour him; but still he would go on in his sin. So *Judas* repented and sorrowed for his sin, because he saw now he should be condemned; and so for punishment he was grieved. *Simon Magus* prays *Peter* to pray for him, but how? *That none of the judgments threatned might fall upon him.*

Exod. 10. 11.

1 Sam. 15.

Mar. 27. 3.

Act. 8. 25.

Cain mourned exceedingly, and cried out, saying, *Gen.* 4. *My sin is greater than can be forgiven me*: But it was not for his hypocrisie in God's service, nor for the cruel murthering of his own Brother, nor the shedding of innocent blood; but because of the punishment that God had inflicted upon him. *Ahab* also

humbled

humbled himself, and put on sackcloath, as though he had been very penitent: But *Elias* wrung it out from him, denouncing God's judgments against him, 2 *King.* 21. 27.

Seeing this is the difference between the godly sorrow of the faithfull, and the worldly sorrow of the wicked; one sorrows for sin, because it is sin; the other because of the punishment only: Let us hereby prove our sorrow. Art thou grieved for sin, because it is sin, because it offends God? And art thou more grieved for sin, because it grieves a mercifull God, than for fear of punishment? Yea, wouldst thou be grieved for sin, though there were no Hell, nor Devil to torment thee; only for this very reason, because it offends thy mercifull God? Then it is a certain token of thy true repentance, and godly sorrow. But if thou find thy heart only to be lumpish, and heavy, in regard of the punishment of sin, in regard of hell and damnation, and if it were not for that, thou couldst be content to live and go on in sin; surely then it is but a carnal

Use. Onely godly sorrow causes true repentance.

carnal sorrow, it is not a godly sorrow, that is, onely for fear of punishment. And this deceiv-s many a man, who thinks he repents, becauſe he is grieved for ſin, in regard of the puniſhment. But the vileſt Atheiſt, and rebrobate in the world, may be grieved for ſin, in regard of his puniſhment, as hell fire, and condemnation; as *Judas* and *Cain* was. *David* did not with *Cain* ſay, his ſins they were greater than could be forgiven: Nor let any ſinner whatſoever, when he hath offended God in a high nature, by aggravating his ſin, deſpair with *Judas*, to be both his own judge and executioner as he was. O let us never ſink under the weight of deſpair, but confeſs our ſins, and crave pardon for them at the hands of his Majeſty with tears and groans: For the child of God is grieved for ſin, becauſe it is ſin, and offends God, though there were no Hell to puniſh.

Doct. 3. Sin defiles a man.

David prays, that the Lord would *waſh* him; therefore ſin defiles, and he was made foul and filthy by his ſin: And to waſh him much, and to rinſe

and

and bathe him, to shew that sin had exceedingly defiled him, and stained him both in soul and body, and made him loathsome, and therefore he desireth to be washed, and cleansed, and purged from the pollution of his sin. *David* knew God was able to forgive him his sin; he did know, that God was not like old *Isaac*, which had but one blessing left, and no more; no, he knew he had store of blessings and mercies for a relenting soul. One deep calleth upon another, saith *David*, the depth of my sins for the depth of God's mercies.

Hence we may learn, what a vile, filthy, and miserable thing sin is in the sight of God; it stains a man's body, it stains a man's soul, it makes him more vile, than the vilest creature that lives; no Toad is so vile and loathsome in the sight of man, as a sinner stained and defiled with sin, is in the sight of God, till he be cleansed and washed from them in the blood of Christ. The Leprosie was a wonderfull disease, it did infect the body, yea, the cloaths on a man's back; the walls of the house, and the very stones. But this Leprosie

Sin defiles the whole man.

Levit. 13.

Yea, the creature.

Leprosie of sin doth more defile a man; it defiles the soul and conscience, yea, even the very heavens and earth are stained with the contagion thereof, and are made (by reason of sin) subject to vanity and corruption, *Rom.* 8. 20. Oh then, see how vile a thing sin is in the sight of God, that the infection thereof should seize upon the creature, and make them, that they dare not endure and abide the glorious presence of God their Creator.

Use 2. Seeing sin is so vile a thing, so filthy and unclean, so polluteth the soul and body, and makes us loathsome in the sight of God, so as no Carrion or Dunghill sends forth a filthier scent or stench than sin: O how should we loath and abhor, quake and tremble at the committing of it? Oh it is a wonder to see how wary men are to shun the Plague; they will not come neer the place and person Infected, but keep aloof off. Oh that we could be as wise and carefull to shun this plague of all plagues, sin; that is the Plague of soul and body.

But alas, poor blind souls, they,

who

who are moſt afraid of the bodily plague and infection, fear not this woefull plague of ſin, make no bones of horrible and grievous ſins, of adultery, drunkenneſs, lying, ſtealing, &c yea, as *Solomon* ſaith, fooliſh men, and poor ignorant ſouls, do make a ſport of ſin, and put on them the name of Virtue: Swearing, is a ſign of a brave gentleman-like-mind; Drunkenneſs, good fellowſhip; Covetouſneſs, good husbandry; Fornication, a trick of youth; Pride, cleanlineſs: This is it which maketh our Land to mourn. Theſe men be clean contrary to *David*; he thought nothing more vile, filthy, and unclean, than ſin; they judge nothing more ſweet, and pleaſant than ſin. But if we could ſee the loathſome filthineſs of ſin, how odious it is in the ſight of God, how it ſtains and defiles both ſoul and body: then we ſhould hate it, and loath it more than a Toad or Serpent, and ſhun it above all things in the world: But alas, men ſin, and yet ſee not that they do ſin; they ſee, and feel no danger, they are ſecure: No man ſaith, *Alas, what have I done?* If

Wicked men add ſin unto ſin, and pay one debt with another.

Jer. 6.

We be wary to avoid temporal danger.

If any man ſhould ſay to any of us, Touch not that Garment, it is infected; or, Taſte not that Drink, it is poyſoned: How ready would we be to ſhun it, and avoid it? We would not touch, nor come near it. But yet, though we tell of ſin, bid them take heed of it, it will infect ſoul and body, and unleſs men do preſently repent, it will bring both to Hell: Yet men, even mad-men, deſperately ruſh into it, wilfully caſting away their own ſouls.

Doct. 4 Hard matter to be cleanſed from the pollution of ſin.

Further, whereas *David* prays to be waſhed, yea, to be waſhed throughly, or much, and often: And more than that, to be cleanſed and rinſed from his ſins; for a deluge of ſin muſt needs have a deluge of puniſhment; and therefore, *David* deſired to be waſhed and cleanſed in the blood of Chriſt, by a lively faith, and a repentant heart. *David*, he deſireth that God would waſh, and purge him from his ſin: And if *David*, ſhall not we deſire to be waſhed and purged, who are, and have been greater ſinners than ever *David* was? We learn hence, that

that it is not so easie a matter for a man to repent, and to get the pardon of his sins, to be washed and cleansed from them, as most men think it is. *David* desireth the Lord to wash, yea, to wash him often, again, and again, and to bathe and rinse him from his sins; shewing that it is a hard thing to have the spots of sin to be washed out, a hard thing to obtain the pardon of our sin, to be cleansed from the stains and blemishes of them: It will cost much sorrow, many a tear, many a sigh and groan, even a great measure of grief; for, look how grievously we have sinned, so greatly should we bewail our sins. And hence it is, that the Lord calling the people to sorrow for their sins, doth not require a light sorrow, or some small measure of grief, but such a sorrow as should even rent their very hearts, *Joel* 2. 13. And the Prophet *David* saith in the seventeenth Verse of this Psalm, that a man's heart must be contrite and broken, even as it were rent asunder with godly sorrow, or else his repentance

pentance will never be accepted with God. *David* saith, *Psal.* 6. 6. *That he watered his couch with tears.* Again he saith, *Psal.* 42. *His tears were his meat day and night.* And indeed, it must not be a small measure of sorrow, that we must shew for our sins. For if we had an hundred eyes, and should weep them all out; and if we had a thousand hearts, and they should all break asunder with remorse, and sorrow; all were too little: Yea, although we should even shed tears of blood for our sins, or with *Jeremy* have our heads full of water.

Use 1. Folly of natural men described.

This condemneth the common opinion of men and women; they do think it is the easiest thing in the world to repent, to get the pardon of their sins; they do think, that *Lord have mercy on me* will serve: Oh! God is mercifull, God is mercifull; and so make God's mercy a pack-horse of all thy filthy sins. But let no man deceive himself, it is another manner of thing to repent than we take it for; it will cost thee many a tear, and many a prayer, before thou canst

have

have a Pardon; it will coſt thee many a ſob, and ſigh, and many a oh, oh ere thou canſt be truly aſſured of the pardon of them.

How do men deceive their own ſouls, thinking every little glimpſe of their ſins ſufficient: No, no, every ſorrow brings not with it repentance. *Ahab* had ſorrow, 1. *King.* 11. *He rent his cloaths, and put on ſackcloath, and faſted.* But this ſorrow was as the morning dew, it did quickly conſume away. The like may be ſaid of *Felix*, *Act.* 24. and King *Agrippa*, who, at the words of *Paul*, could almoſt become a *Chriſtian*; of *Herod*, of *Pharaoh*, and the like; all which have had in them a kind of ſorrow; but it was but carnal, the end whereof is death. It muſt then be a godly ſorrow, ariſing from the ſight of our ſins, that we have offended a good and gracious God, and loving Father in Jeſus Chriſt: And this muſt even wound our very ſouls, as the people of the *Jews*, *Act.* 2. 37. that we know not which way to turn us for comfort.

Let us imitate *David*, let us cry a- *Uſe 2.*

gain

Pſ. 32. 1. Pardon of ſin the greateſt mercy.

again and again unto the Lord for mercy, let us beg hard for the pardon of our ſins, it is the greateſt mercy in the World. Good things are not eaſily gotten, Heaven, Life eternal, are hard to come by, and therefore let us not imagine, that it is ſo eaſie a matter to get the pardon of our ſins: No, no, we muſt fill heaven and earth with cryings and prayers, even as a poor Thief condemned at the Bar, he will cry with tears for mercy. And as a poor Beggar, unlappeth his leggs, ſheweth his wounds, and all to move them that paſs by to pity him: So we muſt cry as for life and death for the pardon of our ſins, lay open our ſores and griefs unto the Lord, and give him no reſt untill we have mercy.

Joh. 1. 29. 1 Joh. 1. 7 Rev. 1. 6. Zac. 13. 1.

Laſtly, it may be demanded what waſhing *David* ſpeaks of here: He ſpeaks not here of the legal waſhing which was uſed in the time of the Law; but he ſpeaks here of that waſhing which is performed only by the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, being laid hold on by Faith: For no water what-

whatsoever can wash away the least spot of sin, but onely the blood of Jesus Christ.

So then we learn hence, that there is nothing in heaven or earth, that can purge us from sin, and from the uncleanness of the soul, but onely the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, being applied unto us by the hand of Faith: He alone is our Saviour, saving perfectly all that are saved, *Heb.* 7. *He is able to save perfectly all that come unto him*, Heb. 1.3. *And by him he hath purged our sins.* So that we are to acknowledge him to be our only and alone Saviour, without partner, according to that, *Act.* 2. *There is no other name under heaven given to save us, but the name of Christ.*

Doct. 5. Blood of Christ alone doth wash away sin. 1 Joh. 1.5 Heb. 9.9. Act. 15.9. 2 Cor. 6. 11.

This sheweth the weakness of the Church of *Rome*, who bear men in hand, that their holy water, as they call it, and conjured stuff, is able to wash away sin: No, no, it cannot do it; onely the blood of Christ can do it, and no other creature in heaven or earth. And therefore, howsoever in word they honour Christ, yet in deed they

they deny him, in joyning to the all-sufficient satisfaction of Christ, other satisfaction: As their Sacrifice in the Mass, to help Christ's sacrifice on the Cross; and the Intercession of the Virgin *Mary*, Saints and Angels, &c. to this meritorious intercession, robbing God of his honour, and Christ of his all-sufficient merit, running from Christ the pure fountain, to the filthy puddle and mire of their own merits and satisfaction. And thus, poor Catholique creatures, they think themselves trimly washed, whereas (alas) *they are not purged from their filthiness, they are as beastly as Swine.*

Use. Seeing we be all defiled with sin, original, actual, old, new; let us seek to Jesus Christ, and desire to be washed, yea, to be bathed and rinsed in his pretious blood: Get one drop of it, and besprinkle our poor souls with it, as *Peter* saith, head, and hands, and all, both soul and body. For that answer given by Christ unto *Peter*, may serve for a warning unto us all: *If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me*; which, if we did well consider, as well

Joh. 13. 8.

our

our own pollution, as also the necessity of Christ's washing, we should answer him with *Peter*, *O Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head.*

If this were *David*'s estate and condition, that he was so filthy and unclean, (having lain but a short time in sin) that he crieth out amain unto the Lord, *to wash him, to purge him, to cleanse him*: Oh then, what shall we imagine or think of those that not once, but often; not a year, with *David*, but all the days of their Life, have lived in the common custom and practice of sinning; that have drunk down iniquity, as a man drinks down water? Their damnation doth not sleep. And yet poor souls, they think, that if they can have but time to remember a few words in the end, as to say, *Lord have mercy on me*, that they shall be saved. But if it did cost *David* so many sighs, and groans, and tears, as in the sixth *Psalm*, which was but a short time in comparison of others: They much deceive themselves, that do imagine it is so easie a matter to be washed *Use.*

washed and cleansed from the pollution of sin, that have lain therein a long time.

Godly sorrow will send us to Christ.

And before we can be washed and cleansed from our sins in the blood of Christ, we must have a godly sorrow, which will send us to Christ Jesus; we must see our filthiness, and uncleanness, how we stand in need to be washed; and we must desire it, and beg it with *David*: O Lord, wash me, rinse me, bathe me in the blood of Christ. Secondly, we must have the hand of faith, by which we must lay hold on Christ's blood, and besprinkle our souls with it; even as a man doth wash his face with his hand: So faith is the hand of the soul, to lay hold and apply Christ's blood, and the merit of it, to cleanse us, and wash us from all our sins.

But alas, poor souls, you shall see many a man and woman that are very curious, and carefull to wash their bodies, and to wash their cloaths; they will not suffer the least spot in them, but look to have them washed: Yet they can go from year to year, with

most vile and filthy souls, that even stink with sin, and never desire to be washed and rinsed: Yea, many of those who seem to be very gay and fair outwardly, carry filthy and unclean hearts within; and if a man could but see into their hearts, and perceive the filthy spots of sin, he would stop his nose, and not endure the smell of them.

VERSE 3.

For I acknowledge mine iniquities, and my sin is ever before mine eyes.

NOw *David* having thus intreated for favour and grace at God's hands, for his great and hainous sins, he doth here labour to move the Lord to pity him, because he doth now most franckly and freely confess his sins, is truly touched and grieved for them; yea, his poor conscience is now upon the rack, wounded, and distressed, and exceedingly afflicted; and therefore he intreateth the Lord to pity him:

David's Reason from his former Petition.

For I acknowledge and confeſs my ſins againſt God, in thy preſence, before the Prophets, and before all thy people, yea, the whole Church of God, by leaving this Pſalm, as a teſtimony of my true repentance and ſorrow for them.

Doct. 1. Confeſſion ever goeth before remiſſion.

Hence mark, that there is no place no mercy, nor any peace to be looked for at God's hands, nor any pardon of ſin, before a ſinner be truly humbled, do freely and frankly confeſs the ſame, and humbly acknowledge with grief of heart his ſins unto the Lord; where we are to obſerve two things: Firſt, the Perſon to whom we muſt confeſs our faults. Secondly, the manner how we muſt confeſs them.

Perſon to whom.

For the Perſon, to whom we muſt confeſs, it is God, as this example of *David* doth teach us, *ver.* 4. *Againſt thee, againſt thee only, have I ſinned.* Again, *Pſal.* 32. 6. *I ſaid, I will confeſs my ſins unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin.* It is true indeed, we may by our ſins wrong men, as *David* did *Urias*: But being in ſin,

ſin, the chiefeſt wrong is unto the Lord. The Scribes and Phariſees, though they were corrupt in many things elſe, yet they held this for a truth, that none could forgive ſins but God onely, *Mark* 2.7. And this doth the Lord teſtifie of himſelf, *Eſay* 45. 35. *I, even I am he that putteth away thy iniquities for mine own ſake.* 1 *Joh.* 1.9. *If we confeſs our ſins, God is faithfull and juſt to forgive us our ſins.* Beſides, the precepts in the Word of God, there is recorded the repentance of God's children, who have humbly acknowledged their ſins before God, as *Manaſſes*, 2 *Chr.* 33. *David*, 2 *Sam.* 11. The prodigal Son, *Luke* 15. So true is that ſaying, *Prov.* 28. 13. *He that hides his ſins ſhall not proſper, but he that confeſſeth them ſhall have mercy.* And this did *David* prove by his own experience, that ſo long as he held his peace, *Pſ.* 22.5. and did not acknowledge his ſins unto the Lord, but concealed, ſmothered, and hid them, ſo long his poor conſcience was upon the rack, his ſoul was troubled, and greatly diſquieted; but af-

ter he had confessed them, and repented of them, the Lord forgave them, and shewed him mercy.

Secondly, we must confess our sins also to men, and that both privately and publiquely, as the quality of sin requireth: For howsoever we condemn auricular confession, as having in it nothing but policy, and a rack to the conscience; yet we do not onely allow, but call and cry for that voluntary confession, which every Christian ought to make to their godly Pastor, of such sins as disquiet the conscience; and no doubt great blessings, and comfort follow them that use this godly practice: And therefore, *Josh.*7.10. When *Jeshua* laboured to bring *Achan* to a sight of his sin, he saith, *My Son, I beseech thee give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and shew me now what thou hast done.* Again, confession must be made unto men, and that in respect of the Church, that the Congregation that hath been offended, may be satisfied; as also, that others may be terrified from fal-

falling into the same sins, 2 *Tim.*4.26. *Them that sin rebuke openly, that the rest may fear.* And last of all, in respect of the sinner himself, that thereby he may be more humbled, as that incestuous person, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. that was delivered up to Satan for his sin, which brought him to humiliation: Whereas otherwise, if the punishment were laid onely upon their purse, few or none would regard it.

But withall we must know, that a man is not bound to confess his sins to the Minister onely, and to none else, as Papists would have men to do to a Frier; but he may make choice of any other Christian friend, according to that of St. *James*, *Acknowledge your faults one to another, and pray one for another, &c.* Jam.5.16

Seeing true and hearty repentance cannot go without a free and franck confession of sins, and hearty and humble acknowledgement of them: First, this condemneth all those who are so far from confessing them, that they are not ashamed to justifie their sins, even to patronize them; to plead for

them: As, tell men of their ſins and impieties, they anſwer, what need you care, you ſhall not anſwer for my ſins, take care for your ſelf: So reprove Swearing, Drunkenneſs, Pride, &c. and men are ſo far from being humbled, and confeſſing them, that they juſtifie them, and ſay they do but as others do, it is the faſhion, and they are not alone: And this is a corruption that we have all by kind, to diſſemble our ſins? our Mothers breaſts have given us no other ſuck. *Adam* our firſt Parent hath taught us, *Gen.* 3. 12. when he was examined, he poſted off the matter from himſelf unto his wife, *The woman that thou gaveſt me, ſhe gave me of the fruit, and I did eat*; and ſo it is with all of us, we are loath to make our confeſſion of our ſins unto God. Men's ſins break forth every day, lying, ſwearing, drunkenneſs, &c. But where is that man to be found, that hath any care to bewail himſelf? all this while that men do not confeſs them, they can have no pardon of them, *Luk.* 13. 5. *Unleſs ye repent ye ſhall all periſh.* Now confeſſion

feſſion is a ſpecial part of true repentance. *David* he begins with himſelf, unrips his own bowels firſt, and ſaith, O Lord; it is I that have done this wickedneſs, and committed this ſin againſt thee, againſt *Uriah*, againſt his wife *Bathſheba*; let me and my father's houſe ſuffer for it, for theſe ſheep have done nothing.

Uſe 2. Seeing there is no pardon of ſin, till we do confeſs it, and humbly acknowledge it; Let us every one freely acknowledge and confeſs our ſins unto the Lord, lay them open and naked before him; it is the beſt way to get pardon of them at his hands. Indeed, in the Court of man, to confeſs our ſins, is the next way to bring ſhame and puniſhment; but in the Court of God it is not ſo, but the next way to have them covered, is to uncover them, and lay them open unto the Lord. I have ſinned, ſaith *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. *The Lord hath taken away thy ſin, thou ſhalt not dye*, ſaith the Prophet. When we confeſs them, then he will cover them: *If we judge our ſelves, we ſhall not be judged of the* 1 Cor. 11 31.

Lord: Oh then, let us not fear to confeſs our ſins, and lay them open unto the Lord with griet and ſorrow; yea, let us deal as a poor Priſoner condemned at the Bar; or, as a poor *Lazar* or cripple, ſhew our ſores, and lay open our wounds, and by that means, we ſhall move the Lord to pitty and compaſſion.

The manner how we muſt confeſs our ſins.

Secondly, that we may ſo confeſs our ſins, and make ſuch an acknowledgment of them, as may be a true confeſſion, and to bring with it a true and unfeigned repentance;

We muſt firſt take heed that we do know our tranſgreſſions, the number of them, the greatneſs of them, the danger of them, how they make us moſt vile in the ſight of God, and moſt loathſome. We muſt know, that we deſerve Hell fire, and eternal Condemnation for them: For, untill a man know his ſin, and his conſcience be convicted for it, and withall ſee the danger of his ſin, he will never humbly and heartily confeſs the ſame.

I know (ſaith *David*) *mine iniquity*. So did *Peter*, although for a time he did

did he knew not what, as a man in a Trance; (for ſin may well be called madneſs) yet afterward he bethought himſelf, and conſidered what he had done, and lamented his folly with tears; and this is required of us all, *Lam.* 3.40. *O let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord:* And the Lord complaineth, *Jer.* 8.6. That he did hearken to ſee if there were any man that would repent, and turn to the Lord; but there was no man ſaid, *What have I done.*

Uſe 1. And ſurely this complaint may be taken too againſt the people of our Land, or Nation, that, notwithſtanding God hath cried and called unto us ſo often from Heaven, by his powerfull voice in his Word, by his mercies, and by his judgements, ſo ſenſible, that if the Magicians in *Egypt* were amongſt us, they could do no leſs than acknowledge it to be the finger of God: Yet where is the man almoſt to be found that looketh back unto his own ways, to aſk the queſtion of his own heart, to ſay, *Alas, what have I done?* or will

David here, *I know mine iniquities.*

Now there is a two-fold knowledge of our ſin: Firſt, general; Secondly, ſpecial. General knowledge never worketh any reformation; for this is found (for the moſt part) in all men, which can ſay they are ſinners: But there is a ſpecial knowledge of ſin, which God will once diſcover unto us, either in mercy to our good and ſalvation, as here, to *David*, to *Peter*, to *Mary Magdalen*, *&c.* or elſe in wrath, as he did unto *Judas*, *Cain*, *Achitophel*, *&c.* to their final condemnation; which may teach us all to pray unto the Lord, ſo to give us the ſight of our ſins, as that we never deſpair of his mercy, nat our ſins may never riſe up againſt us to our confuſion.

Secondly, our Confeſſion of our ſins, muſt proceed from ſorrow of heart for them, with a hatred of them, ſo as nothing do more grieve us than our Offences.

And this our Saviour Chriſt inſinuateth, *Mat.* 11. 28. *When he calleth only ſuch unto him as are weary and laden,*

den, even ready to faint under the burthen of their sins. And this doth *David* himself confess, *Ps.* 38. *My sins* (saith he) *are as a weighty burthen, too heavy for me to bear.* For, when men can run away with their sins, as though they were as light as a feather, it is an evident token they were never throughly humbled for them.

Thirdly, it must be frank, and free, not wrung out by compulsion; as sometimes a wicked man, sometimes under the rod may confess his sins, as *Pharaoh*, *Judas*, and the like: But this confession was only by compulsion wrung out of them; it came not from any sorrow or hatred of sin, but for fear of judgment and punishment. But we must be as forward, and as ready to confess them, to the glory of God, as we were to commit them to his dishonour. Thus did *David* confess his sin, *Psal.* 32. 5. *I acknowledg'd my sin unto thee, and mine iniquities have I not hid.* *Nathan* told *David* he had sinned; which words stole secretly into his heart: For, till he had notice of it, he could not shed Exod. 10. 17.

a tear; for he thought all was safe and secure. It was God's love to *David*, that the Prophets motion should so rowse and stir up such a King as *David* was, to make him dis-throne himself, and forsake his Scepter, and beat his breast, saying, *I acknowledge mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me.* It must be without all excuse, or lessening of our sins; we may not mince them, or excuse them, nor dissemble them, nor cloak them; but lay them open in their colours, rather aggravating them, than diminishing them, as sometimes St. *Austin* did.

Fourthly, we must confess our sins, with purpose to forsake them, according unto that of the Prophet, *Is.* 55. *Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the ungodly man his own imagination, and return unto the Lord.*

There must be in us a desire to forsake all our sins, and every wicked way, else there's no true repentance: For one sin is a sufficient hold for Satan, and a sufficient bar to keep out Christ Jesus, as we may see by the example of *Herod*, *Mar.* 6. *Judas*, *&c.*

This

This shews, that most men and women do not truly repent; for though they can say, *God be mercifull unto us, we are all sinners*; yet in particular they see it not; no, they think they keep the commandements of God; a man can very hardly perswade them, that they break any of the Commandements in particular; although in general, and in a confused manner, they confess themselves to be sinners, yet in particular they do not so: Nay, they are so far from aggravating their sins, that they rather extenuate them by all means possible; *I am not alone, nor I am not the first, nor I hope I shall not be the last.* For any grief or sorrow for sin, it is as far from them, as they are far from it.

This sheweth, that those, who, though they confess themselves sinners, yet, in particular; yet, because they do it not with feeling, with hatred and detestation of sin, therefore they be faulty: For we should even with right sorrowfull hearts, and wounded souls, confess our sins, with the greatest hatred of them as possibly *Use 2.*

possibly we can: So, as often as we speak of them, it should make our hearts to yearn, and tears to stand in our eyes.

But most of all, are here condemned those vile beasts and filthy sinners, who are so far from speaking of their filthy and beastly sins with hatred and dislike, that they do in bravery speak of them, with a kind of joy and delight. Now, who would ever think a man to be so vile, to brag of his own shame, and boast of his own filthiness? If a Prisoner, going in the way to the Gallows, should then bragg of his robberies, and villanies, and be proud of his halter, what a desperate thing were that? And yet such filthy beasts there be in the world, who are not ashamed to boast of their own shame and filthiness; to talk, yea, to glory of their own uncleanness, and of their filthy drunkenness; How they have drunk their share of so many quarts of wine; how they have made so many drunk. O wretched men! it is a wonder that the House falleth not on them, as it

did

did on the *Philistines*; or that God raineth not fire and brimstone from heaven to consume them, as *Sodom* was, or smite them dead like *Herod*.

And my sin is ever before mine eyes.

DAvid having shewed, how that he had freely confessed and acknowledged his sins unto the Lord; here he sheweth the cause which moved him so humbly to acknowledge the same: Namely, because they were ever in his sight, and before his eyes; as if he would have said, howsoever I have a long time continued and lay secure in sins, and did not know or see the danger of them; yet now, being told of them, by the Prophet, I see them, and so behold them, that my conscience accuses me of them, and I can have no rest, but my wounded conscience doth urge me, and compell me to confess my sins to thee, desiring thee, O Lord, to chaster me as a Son, but do not disinherit me for my disobedience, in having committed these hainous sins, and offences against thee.

Cause that movid *David* to confess his sin.

Where

Where, first of all we may behold the dangerous effect of sin. When the Devil tempts a man unto it, he doth ever obscure the misery of sin, the curse of God due to sin, the torments of Hell, and the damnation of Body and Soul in Hell-fire for evermore: These things the Devil doth labour to keep from man's eyes, buzzing onely in their ears the profit of sin, gain, commodity, pleasure, delight, and sweetness of sin, that so shewing them onely the golden bait of sin, and hiding the poisoned hook, he might move men to run head-long into all sin: But when Satan gets his purpose, and men be in his snare, and fallen in sin, Oh how will he then press their poor consciences? then he will load them, and set out their sins to the full, in a most ugly form: Nothing then but hell-fire, damnation, and the curse of God, that so if it be possible, he may draw them into the gulf of despair, or like *Job's* wife, say to them, *Curse God and dye.*

Oh that men would consider this in time, how sin will one day change her

her countenance, however it commeth at first in a flattering form, pretending nothing but friendship, but in the end will leave a sting behind it, even a guilty conscience, terrour of mind, and anguish of spirit. Wherefore let us fly from sin, as from the biting of a Serpent, that we be not stung therewith unto eternal Death; knowing, *the wages of sin is death.* Ro. 6.23.

Whereas *David's* sins being always before him, did urge him to confess them; yea, to repent, and beg the pardon of them. We learn, That the remembrance of our sins, and the calling them to mind, together with a conscience accusing for them, is the way and means to come to true repentance, to make a man confess them, and beg the pardon of them: Whereas, if they slip out of our minds, or we know them not, or we find not our consciences to accuse us of them, alas, we can neither confess them, nor truly be humbled, and beg the pardon of them. And therefore *David* confesseth here, that by reason his sins were ever before him, he was

Doct. An accusing conscience, the means to bring us to repentance.

was continually vexed and tormented with the horrour of them; his conscience still accused and troubled him, and therefore he is constrained and urged humbly to confess them, and to beg the pardon of them at God's hands: For indeed, repentance is as necessary and as comfortable to a sinner, as a couch to a weary traveller, or as meat to the hungry stomack. Whereas the wrath of God doth ever follow such as have sleepy and drowsie consciences, giving them over to a rebrobate sense, to a slumbering spirit, and to hardness of the heart, that they fall to be past feeling, and cannot repent, *Rom.* 1.28. *Such as regarded not to know God, he gave them up to their hearts lust, unto all uncleanness, and punisht one sin with another.* And surely it is just with God, that he should forsake us with his grace, that have forsaken him by our sins; according to that of the Propher, *Ps.* 11. *My people would not hear my voice, and Israel would none of me: So I gave them up unto the hardness of their hearts, and they have walked in their own counsel.*

So

So that hence we learn, that a man will never repent truly of his sins, seek to God for pardon: Neither is there any other way or means to be reconciled to God, but this, to feel the weight and burthen of his sins, and feeling his conscience to accuse him, to vex and wound him, till he find God to be mercifull, and reconciled unto him for the pardon of them, and the appeasing and quieting of the conscience. And therefore, Knowledge must go before repentance; to know, as *Nathan* told *David*, what great sins we have committed. St. *Austin* saith, that many men lose their strength, because they do depend upon their own strength; and if we withdraw our obedience from God, he will withdraw his blessings from us, and then we run head-long into all kind of sin, and so wound our consciences, that we are never at rest.

Sight of sin first step to Repentance.

Seeing till such time as the conscience be wounded for sin, and vexed and tormented with it, a man will never speak for pardon? Then we learn hence, that no man can taste of the sweet-

sweetness of God's mercy in Christ for his Salvation, untill he have tasted of the bitter fruit of sin, and of a wounded and distressed conscience. Look on *Pharaoh*, and the *Jews*. And as for those that would taste of God's mercy, and yet are loath to feel the smart of sin, they deceive themselves. We see, that ere the body be purged, men must take bitter pills, or bitter potions: And as for those who never felt any such grief nor wound of conscience, no such astonishment for their sins, they may justly fear their repentance is not found, that they have not as yet been truly humbled: For it is certain, that before we can truly repent, and be reconciled to God, we must have the feeling of the smart of sin, and find our hearts troubled, and our consciences wounded. *David* by his repentance made a breach, and by his true contrition pulled down the strong hold of sin, and Satan, which the Devil and his Legions of fiends had raised in him; for saith he, *My sin is ever before me*: For indeed all our repentance proceeds from God's grace:

Psa. 6. 32. Acts 2. 3.

Such may suspect their Repentance, who feel no sin to wound their consciences.

grace, for we cannot repent when we would, or have it by nature; and the soul which lies dead in sin, can no more perform true repentance, than the body in the grave can dispose it self to the last resurrection. It is the Lord onely which plows up the furrows of our hearts; that is, humbles us with a sense of his displeasure, as he did *David*; therefore the root of repentance is God, and his proceeding is by his two hands, Justice and Mercy, which *Jeremy* calls the Hammer and Fire by which the Lord works the soul, and makes it capable of eternal life, and union with Christ: All this *David* did strive for, and he watered his Eyes by day, and his Couch by night with his tears of true repentance.

This confutes that fond and foolish opinion of many in the World, who, if they see any wounded for sin, distressed in soul, crying out of his misery, and feeling his conscience exceedingly terrified, begins to despair of God's mercy: What do men judge of such a man? surely that

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it is nothing but Melancholly and Dumpishness, and therefore they counsel him to be jocund, to go to merry company, to put away such odd conceits, such vain and fooliſh fancies; but alas, poor souls, they consider not that it is the special work of God, wounding the conscience for sin, that they feel the wrath of God for sin, and are troubled and vexed for that, and till God give mercy, and reconciliation be had in Christ, there can be no peace.

Use 3. Dead conscience a heavy judgment.

We learn hence, that it is better to have an accusing conscience for sin, than to have a dead conscience, a benummed conscience, a sleepy and slumbering conscience, a seared and frozen conscience: For if a man's conscience do daily bring his sins to mind, so that he sees them before his eyes, then he will not onely be grieved for them, but will confess them, and beg the pardon of them; but when a man hath a slumbering conscience, that is benummed, then he goes on in sin from day to day, never feeleth any smart of it, nor ever desires the par-

pardon of it, as the poor Jews, who seeing their fearfull estate, cry out, *What must we do to be saved?* So do all wounded consciences, seeing their fearfull sins, and wretched estate, cry out for mercy, and seek for pardon. Act. 2. 37.

Oh, it is a sign of a fearfull judgment of God, to have a sleepy, or a drowsie conscience: It is like a wild beast, which so long as it lies asleep, seemeth very tame and gentle, but when he is rowsed, flies into a man's face. Even so, howsoever a man's conscience may seem for a time to be quiet, and men may think they have a good conscience indeed, so long as they imagine none knows of their sins and iniquities but themselves; yet being awaked by the Minister of God, it will break out into humility, as *David*, saying, *I am the man, I have sinned, and done this evil, and am worthy to have crosses and afflictions come upon me.*

Seeing *David* doth acknowledge here, that his sins being ever before him, awaked him, and urged him instantly, and earnestly to seek for pardon; we learn, That it is a good thing for *Doct.* 3. Necessary duty to call our sins to account.

for us to call our sins to account, to have them often in mind, to set them before our eyes, the greatness, number, and hainousness of them. It was no disgrace for *David*, (though he was a King) to fall down at God's mercy seat, and to lay open his sins, as he did, it was his next way to obtain quietness to his soul and mind, and to have forgiveness.

Lam. 3. 40. First, it is a good means to prepare us to true repentance, and humiliation for them.

Secondly, it is a special means to make us hate them, and dislike them seeing the danger of them, how loathsome they be in God's sight.

Thirdly, the remembrance of our sins makes us wary, that we fall not into them again; but our former falls makes us to take heed of falling in time to come.

Fourthly, the remembrance of our sins makes us pity other men; because, though they fall dangerously, yet we know we have fallen as well as they; therefore we hope, God will give unto them repentance.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, the continuall remembrance of our own sins, puts us in mind of God's mercy in the pardon of them: And when men easily suffer their old sins to pass away, and slip out of their minds, they will easily fall into new, and easily forget the mercy of God, and how much they be bound unto him. *Paul* gives this excellent example, who remembering how he had persecuted the *Church*, saith, *Notwithstanding, God was mercifull unto me.* So that the continuall remembrance of our sins, puts us in mind of God's mercifull dealing with us, and must stir us up to thankfulness. 1 Tim. 1.

For if we forget them, the Lord will remember them; and if we remember them, the Lord will forget them. This then should make every man beware, how he forgetteth his sins, and casts them carelesly behind his back; for this is a sign, that God remembers them, and will call that man to accompt for them.

Use. 2. This shews the great impiety of those men and women, who seek all

means to put their sins out of their minds, to smother the checks of their consciences by sports and pastimes, by merry company, or by other means, to keep themselves from the sight of their sins. They cannot abide to hear of them by others, or to imagine of them themselves, but put away the remembrance of them by all means possible, by the delights of the world, and by company, as I said before; which is even as much, as, when a man hath burnt his finger, presently puts it into cold water, thinking thereby to find ease; but taken out again, inflames it the more, and doth give it no true ease. Oh! this should make men ever repent, and be humbled for their sins. Oh! this should make them confess their sins with tears, and beg the pardon of them.

Note of a wicked man.

Use 2. It must stir us up to the serious and often meditation of our sins, to keep them in memory, our old and new sins, open and secret, even sins of our youth, to humble us, and to cause us to keep in mind the endless mercy of God in pardon of them; and

Psal. 25.

there-

therefore we should do well to set some time apart to call our life to accompt: *Tremble and sin not, commune with your hearts upon your bed, and be still:* Where *David* calls upon *Saul's* Courtiers, to fear God's judgements and threatnings. It is a special means to humble us, and to move us to Repentance, to keep a note of all our offences and faults, that we may ever have matter to humble our hard and stony hearts. Psal. 4.5.

Use 1. We see the cause here why so few do truly repent, and confess their faults unto God, and beg the pardon of them, Namely, because that their sins be ever out of their sight; though they pry into, and espy the faults of other men, and have them in their sight, yet do they cast their own behind them; and by that means, never setting their sins in sight, they forget them, and be never humbled for them; but the Lord threatneth all such, that if they will not set their sins before them, then will he take the pains to set them all in order before them, one by one, *Psa.* 50. *I will reprove thee,*

Cause why so few do repent.

and set before thee the things that thou hast done; O consider this, ye that forget God, least he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.

Doct. 4. Sin once known doth ever accuse till it be pardoned.

When as *David* saith, in the confessing of his sins, that they were ever in his sight: First, they all this while grieve and vex him, wound his soul and conscience; We learn, that sin once known, and felt, doth so accuse and wound the conscience of a poor sinner, that there can be no rest and quietness untill it be pardoned: For it is ever in his sight, and before his eyes, troubling and vexing his mind, and wounding his conscience. Therefore this made *David* to confess, saying, *Thou O Lord didst convert my heart, and set my crooked will and wandring mind in frame.* And as it was with *David*, so it fares with every poor sinner; after the Lord in mercy opens our eyes, to come to the knowledge of our sins, and our misery by them, so as our consciences do accuse us, and we feel the weight of God's anger pressing down our souls, there can be nothing but hell and

and anguish for the present time, nothing but extreme sorrow and vexation of spirit, untill we find some comfortable answer from God for the pardon of them. As we see a poor Prisoner arraigned, convicted, and condemned to Death; there is nothing but sorrow, and grief; no joy in Wife, Child, Friends, Lands, Livings, Gold or Silver; Meat, or Musick; Only the gracious pardon of the King can revive him, and make a glad man: So it is with a poor sinner arraigned in his own conscience for sin, convicted and condemned in his own soul, before the barr of God's judgements: Nothing can now comfort him, and cheer him up, and revive his wounded conscience, but a gracious pardon from the Almighties mercy, sealed with the blood of the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world.

Use 1. Undirect course that worldlings take.

This shews the miserable and pitifull estate of many thousands in the World, who lye in sin, sleep in sin, and never seek for pardon, never seek for mercy at the hands of God; and if

they find and feel their ſins, then they run to this vanity, to that paſtime, to ſmother the checks of their Conſciences, and by merry Company, in Eating and Drinking, Carding, Dicing, &c. ſeek to ſtop the mouth of their Conſciences, and to ſmother it. But alas, we ſee this is cold Muſick for a wounded Conſcience: *Saul* thought to have prevailed by this, at what time he called *David* to play, and to make Muſick before him; but by and by, his wound was greater: For theſe men that ſeek by ſuch devices to ſtop the mouth of their Conſciences, they do as a man that is in the fit of a burning Ague; he is hot, and to cool his heat, he drinketh a draught of cold water, that indeed (for the preſent) will ſomewhat allay the heat of the diſeaſe, yet by and by his fit is increaſed, and made the worſe.

Uſe 2. Let us then never give any reſt to our ſouls, untill we have gotten the aſſured perſwaſion of the pardon of all our offences; for ſo long as the Conſcience doth accuſe for ſin, ſo long

long we shall find no rest nor quietness: No, there is no peace till we be reconciled to God by true repentance, and till the conscience leave accusing, let us never leave repenting, and truly humble our selves for the pardon of our sins. None can forgive our sins, but God, all worldly and human help is not to be respected: Therefore we ought to pray, and be most frequent in our petitions, that God would forgive us our sins. Man never goes to heaven for any thing, if he can get it by human help: When the Physitian of the body gives us over, then we are content to become God's Patients. Rom. 5. 1.

It is to be observed, that *David*, in the confession of his sins, saith, I acknowledge my sins; not speaking of his hainous sin of Adultery alone, but of many sins wrapped up together from his youth: For he did not only commit Adultery with *Bathsheba* the Wife of *Uriah*, but shed also his guiltless and innocent blood; Yea, with him caused, as it is like, many of his good Subjects and loyal

Souldiers to be slain. He sought for to cover his sins closely, and securely, by bidding *Uriah* to go home to his Wife, that so the child might be thought to be his. And to all these he addeth this, that he laid the whole Church open to the Enemy, and to the anger of God.

Doct. 5. Sin never goes alone.

Hence note then for our instruction, that *David* confesseth, one sin will never go alone, but sin goes by couples, by heaps, one in the neck of another, as he that taketh a Chain by the end, and pulleth but one link, all the rest do follow: So, if a man give liberty to one sin, that sin will not go alone, but draweth another: Adultery will often bring murther with it; Swearing, lying with it; so Drunkenness, whoredome, &c. The Apostle biddeth us, *Not to walk as children of darkness, in surfeiting and drunkennesse; not in chambering and wantonnesse; not in strife and envying:* Shewing unto us, that sins go by couples, and one draweth on another, and will hardly go alone.

Rom. 13. 13.

It is like a Gangrene, or Canker, it

it fretteth and eateth further and further; the hand infecteth the arm, and the foot the legg, and so one Member another, till it hath spread it self over the whole body; if the part that is infected be not cut off at the beginning. This doth the Apostle teach, 2 *Tim.* 2. 16. *Stay prophane and vain babblings, for they increase unto more ungodliness, and their words will fret as doth a Canker.* St. *James* also sheweth the fruitfulness of sin, saying, *When lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin when it is finished, it brings forth death.* And as sin doth increase, so do God's judgements, *Levit. Chap.* 26. 12, 3. *If ye walk stubbornly against me, and will not obey me, I will then bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins; yet if by these ye will not be reformed by me, but walk stubbornly against me, then will I also walk stubbornly against you; and I will yet smite you seven times for your sins.* And thus we see again, how God will keep a proportion betwixt our sins and his punishment.

Use 3. Seeing this is the curſed nature of ſin, that it will never go alone, but one will draw on another, Drunkenneſs, Whoredome, Murder, &c. it ſtands us all in hand to take heed that we give liberty to no ſin, live in none, delight in none; for if we do, we ſhall ſurely find, that one ſin will never go alone; but let us abhor all: Hate every ſin, and ſtrive againſt all. We ſee this common in the World, that if a man ſhall yield to one ſin, by and by it will draw him to another; and often (as it was in *David*) Whoredom will bring Murder with it, ſometimes of the Husband, ſometimes of the Child, ſometimes of two or three; and therefore let us be very carefull to ſhun and avoid every ſin, live in none: For though one ſin be enough to carry a man to the gulf of Hell, yet one will never go alone by it ſelf.

Note.

We may ſee this in the example of *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. 8. He was reproved of God for his malice conceived againſt his Brother; *But he hearkned*

not

not to the voice of the Lord, but hardned his heart, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of his Brother. This appeareth in *Judas*, *Matth.* 26. Having once entertained covetousnes in his heart, he fell from covetousnes to treason; and at the last became his own Judge and Executioner.

The like we may behold in *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 16. 1. *Who fell away from God step by step, untill the Spirit of God had utterly forsaken him, and he brake out into open rebellion against God Almighty.*

For as amongst all the blessings which the Lord doth bestow upon the Sons of men in this world, a soft and tender heart is one of the greatest, which is checked, and controlled, and soon made to bleed; so there can be no greater curse laid upon a man, than to have a rebellious heart, which heardeth up every day vengeance against it self.

VERSE

VERSE IV.

4. *Against thee, against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: That thou maist be just when thou speakest, and pure when thou judgest.*

In this verse, *David* acknowledgeth his special sins.

NOw in this Verse, and the two which follow, *David* proceedeth in the humble acknowledgment and confession of his sins: First, his actuall sins: Secondly, from them he commeth to the fountain and original of all sin; namely, his natural corruption, wherein he was conceived and born: and this Original sin he speaketh of, in the next Verse following.

Two parts.

This fourth Verse containeth in it two parts: First, a free acknowledgment of his particular, special, and actual sins: In the second, he doth clear the Lord of all cruelty and injustice,

juſtice, that howſoever the Lord had not only ſharply reproved him by the miniſtry of *Nathan*, but alſo puniſhed him, and grievouſly afflicted him for his ſins, in taking away the child that was born in Adultery: Yet, he doth acknowledge the Lord to be juſt and righteous in all his ways.

In the firſt part of the Verſe, conſider firſt the party to whom he confeſſeth, *Againſt thee, againſt thee only*; where he ſheweth the great dolour and extreme grief of his mind for his ſin againſt God, in that he doubleth the words, *Againſt thee, againſt thee.* Secondly, we are to obſerve how he doth acknowledge his ſpecial and particular ſins; namely, adultery, murther, and ſhedding of innocent blood, *I have ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.*

(*Againſt thee.*) Theſe words are expounded diverſly: Firſt, that it is as much as if *David* ſhould have ſaid, Oh Lord, howſoever I have grievouſly offended in committing adultery and murther; yet I have ſo hid my faults from man, that there is none

none that knew it but thou alone; so that he acknowledgeth all the sin was against God, because no mortal man was privy to his sins.

Others expound it thus: That although *David* had offended against man, yet he was specially wounded and grieved, for that he had broken the Law of God; so that though it be true, that he had done great wrong to his faithfull servant and most loyal subject, *Uriah*; yet here was that which pricked his heart, and wounded him to the quick, namely, because he had offended his most mercifull and loving God. As if he should have said, O Lord my God, although the whole world should clear me, and no man living should accuse me; yet it grieveth me at the very heart, because I have offended thee my most mercifull God.

Doct. 1. A man's sins are open before God.

Hence first I note, That howsoever a man may hide his sins from men and Angels, yet it is impossible to hide them from the All-seeing eyes of the Almighty. *David* had committed Adultery closely, he had laboured to hide

hide it and cover it, by marrying *Bathsheba*, the Wife of *Uriah*; but yet alas, all his shifts and cunning fetches could not hide it from God: He saw it, and observed it; and now *David* confesses the same; *Against thee, Against thee:* The like we shall see in *Joseph's* brethren, when they sold him into *Egypt*; so in *Jezabel*, in putting *Naboth* to Death; so in these days men be cunning to commit Adultery closely, and in the twi-light, in a dark corner, in close and secret manner, to lye, steal, deceive, commit adultery, fornication, and all uncleanness: But (poor souls) they do deceive themselves, for they cannot hide their sins from God's all-seeing eyes, Night and Day is all one to him; yea, the Lord doth search the very hearts and reins, *Understanding our very thoughts long before*, 1 King Chap. 83. 9. *The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth every word of the mind.* Again, Psal. 13. 6. *Thou knowest my sitting down, and my rising up, thou understandest my thoughts long before; there is not a word in my tongue,*

Gen. 37. 1 Reg. 21 Rev. 2. 18. Psa. 159. Be, as thou seemest;

Or, seem as thou art.

tongue, but thou, O Lord, knoweth it altogether. And surely when this perswasion taketh place, that the Lord is present every where, and beholds all things; there doth Religion, Conscience, and true Obedience begin in that man. For he that hath the Lord always before him, will not greatly fall, *Psal.* 16. 8. *Heb.* 4. 13. For the Lord will find out every transgression, though never so secretly concealed, which may teach us in all things to keep Faith and a good Conscience; for although we may delude men, yet we cannot deceive the Almighty.

Use 1. Folly of sinners described.

This condemns the extreme folly and madness of men and women, who, if they can hide their faults from men, they care for no more: And therefore, they do labour to commit them closely and secretly. But use all thy skill and policy, yet thou canst by no means hide thy sins from the clear sight of God.

Thou maist lye, dissemble, and deceive so closely, that neither men nor Angels can detect thee: Thou mayest com-

commit Adultery in the dark, and under a Canopy, so as no man living shall be privy to it: Thou maist steal when none can see thee; but all this while, remember that thou standest naked and discovered before God: He sees thee, his All-seeing eyes, like to a flame of fire, pierce into thy heart and entralls. Many men, like *Gehezi*, when they have sinned, can wipe their mouths smoothly, and demurely say, *Thy servant went no whither.* But let them remember ever, that it is impossible to hide their transgressions from God, though they may cover them from men: But of this hereafter. Heb. 4. 13

This same Doctrine may serve for an excellent preservative against all secret sins; for this is the cursed nature of man to abstain many times from actual sins, onely for shame, or for fear of punishment, which otherwise would make conscience of no sin. Oh that such men would remember, that though they be out of the sight of men, yet they be in the presence of the Almighty; he sees them, and *Use* 2.

and behold them, even in the darkest night, and in the secret corner; his eyes are like to a flame of fire, *Rev.* 2. 18. And although men may blear the eyes of men, yet they cannot blear the eyes of the Almighty.

It would be an excellent means to withhold them, and keep them from many horrible crimes, which otherwise they would commit. For the Lord looketh narrowly upon us, and searcheth very strictly into us; we cannot have the least unclean thought within us, but he, which is most pure, doth see and behold us. He could discover *Judas* his hypocrisie, and therefore called him a Devil. He sees again *Nathaniel's* sincerity, and therefore pronounceth him *a true Israelite, in whom there was no guile.* So that they that commit sin in secret, he that sees in secret, will one day reward them openly. When *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. 5. brought unto God an oblation of the fruit of the ground, he had no regard to him, nor to his offering, because the Lord saw the secret hypocrisie of his heart. And this is the reason that *David* u-

serh

seth to perswade *Solomon* his Son to have a care to learn, and to practise the Will of God, 1 *Chro.* 28. 8. *And thou* Solomon, *my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts.*

When as the Prophet *David* repeateth the words, Against *thee*, against *thee*: Here mark the extreme sorrow and grief of *David's* heart, that he had sinned against his mercifull God. What was it that so grieved his soul? The shame of the sin could not; for that was not known but to God only: Neither fear of punishment; for what man durst be so bold as to call him to accompt? but that he had been so vile and wretched, to sin against his most loving God; this was the thing that made his heart to bleed: Which must teach us all this Lesson, that whensoever we fall into any sin, this consideration above all others, should sink deepest into our hearts; namely, the consideration of the Person whom we have offended, and that not simply against man, but against God himself. And

Doct. What sorrow it is that accompanies Repentance.

The person whom he had offended.

David's sin aggravated. 2 Sam. 12.

And this sin of *David* is aggravated in divers respects.

First, *Nathan* telleth him, Almighty God had bestowed upon him the Kingdome, and the wives of his Lord and if that had been too little, he would have given him more, 2 *Sam.* 42.

Secondly, that *David*, a man whom God had so highly honoured, that had taken him from a Sheep-fold, and gave to him a Scepter; which by his mighty power made him escape the hands of all his enemies, and had graced him with the gift of his Spirit; who had made so great proceedings in Religion, and the worship of God: It could not but cut him, and wound him at the very heart, that he should so wickedly and fouly fall into such grievous sins.

Thirdly, in that his example should bring a great slander to the Church of God, and open the mouth of the uncircumcised *Philistines*, to reproach and revile them, as we see in *Shimei*.

Fourthly, in that he had by his sins laid open the Church and people of God unto his judgements, to plague and punish them. Now

Now from this practice of *David*, we learn that which I taught before, namely, that the children of God are grieved for sin, because it offends and displeases their mercifull God. *David* needed not to have been so much troubled for his sin; either in shame, for it was not known but to God alone; or punishment, for none could call him to accompt; but, that he had offended his mercifull God and loving Father, it did torment and vex his conscience exceedingly: So every child of God that truly repents of sin, grieves more because it offends God, than for fear of shame or punishment; as we see it in *David*, Psal. 139. *I have hid thy word within my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* The like we may see in *Joseph*, *Gen.* 29. when he was tempted to lewdness by his adulterous Mistress, his answer is worthy to be remembred of us; *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* The wrong that he should have done unto his Master did not so much prevail with him, as that he knew he should

True note of Repentance.

should sin against God: And the like may be said of *Peter*, *Mat.* 26. who remembring how kind and loving Christ had been to him, even to pray to his Father for him, when Sathan desired to buffet him; That told him, *Mat.* 16. *That the gates of hell should never prevail against him*: The looking back of this his Master, wounded him to the heart, that he should sin against him, so cowardly to deny him.

Use 1. Well, seeing this is the nature of true repentance, of godly sorrow, and remorse of Conscience for sin, that the Child of God is grieved for his sin, because it displeaseth God, his most loving and mercifull Father; as in *Joseph*, *David*, and the prodigal Son, &c. Let us labour to find our hearts thus affected, that we can mourn for sin, because it is sin that offendeh God our loving Father: Though none know of it, nor could accuse us for it, nay, although there were no Hell, nor Judgement for to condemn us, yet, that we find our hearts wounded for our secret sins, for our close and hidden transgressions;

sions; because we know they offend our most gracious God, and loving Father.

Let it be far from us to say with *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* 5. *Who is the Lord, that I should be afraid to sin?* Oh know, (Oh man) whatsoever thou art, that exaltest thy self in this manner, to sin with a high hand against the Almighty, that the Lord is a consuming fire: It is he that drowned *Pharaoh* and all his Hoast, *Exod.* 14. It is he that made *Jerusalem* a heap of stones, *Mat.* 26. It is he that suddenly destroyed *Herod*, *Act.* 12. and sent fire upon *Sodom*, *Gen.* 19. Learn therefore to know God aright, and it will make thee quake and tremble to sin against him.

This sheweth, that most men's repentance is but counterfeit and unsound: For, were it not for fear of shame and punishment, they could be content to commit sin, to live in sin from day to day, as *Potiphar's* wife tempted *Joseph* continually to sin and uncleanness: Alas, she thought not that God would see and behold it. But

Use 2.

Gen. 39.

But whatsoever thou art, unless thou find thy heart humbled for thy close and hidden sin, and thy secret corruptions, I tell thee, thou art not truly humbled; the veriest Beast and Atheist that ever lived, may confess his known sins, and in regard of the shame and punishment, be sorry for them; as *Pharaoh, Judas, Saul, Simon Magus, &c.* But here is godly sorrow, which brings repentance never to be repented of, To be grieved for sin, though we should have neither shame nor punishment, seeing it offendeth a gracious and mercifull God: As we see two children, one is a natural, loving, and dutifull child, and he is loath to offend his Father, though he never corrects him, because he sees his Father kind unto him. Another that is of a froward nature, he is loath to offend before his Father, for fear of the whip; and therefore out of his Father's sight he will play his prancks.

Ex. 20. 2 Sam. 1. Mat. 27. Act. 8. 25.

A Simile.

Doct. 3. A penitent person never excuses his sin.

In that *David* thus lays open his sin, though it was secret, and doth aggravate it: We learn, That he that truly reper-

repented of his ſin, will not excuſe it, mince it, hide it, and cloak it, and ſeek ſtarting holes to conceal it; but he will truly and humbly acknowledge it, lay it open, and make it manifeſt unto God. He doth not blame the folly of the woman, nor by any means ſeek to hide his ſins, but layeth them open before the Lord: *Againſt thee have I ſinned.* So it is the manner of God's children that do truly repent, to lay open their ſins in the worſt and vileſt form, to make them greater, not leſſer.

Uſe 2. Note of wicked men.

Well then, this doth ſhew, that thoſe men are not truly humbled, neither yet have truly repented, that do ſeek ſtarting holes for their ſin: I am not alone, if I go to Hell, I ſhall have more company: It is but the faſhion; and if I do no worſe than ſwear by Faith, Troth, &c. the Lord I hope will pardon me. This excuſing and cloaking of ſin, is a token of a naughty and diſſembling heart, that that man or woman is not truly humbled as they ſhould: We ſee this in *Saul*, he was ſo far from aggravating

gravating and increasing his sin, that he found out many excuses; *The people did it, and it was to offer Sacrifice:* So the wicked in their Pilgrimage, are so far from confessing their sins, that they rather excuse them. So that it is a true note of a wicked and graceless heart to excuse sin, to hide it, and cover it; and he that doth so, shall never find mercy.

1 Sam. 15 Mat. 15.

Prov. 28. 13.

Against thee, against thee only have I sinned.

IT may here be demanded, how *David* could say, that he had only sinned against God? Did he not sin against *Urias* his faithfull servant, and loving subject: First, in committing adultery with his wife, and then in causing his guiltless blood to be shed? how then could *David* say here, *Against thee (only) have I sinned?*

I answer, First, *David* had sinned indeed against *Urias*, and that, two several ways: First, in his wife, not in his goods; for then perhaps he might have made amends; but taking his wife out of his bosom (as *Nathan* telleth

telleth him) he could never make recompence: When *Abimelech* a heathen King, *Gen.* 20. did ignorantly take *Abraham's* wife into his house, when he knew the same, (although he defiled her not, yet) gave *Abraham* a large gift for satisfaction. What satisfaction then might *David* give, being not a Heathen man, but a Prophet of the Lord, who wittingly takes the wife of *Urias*, and defiled her?

Secondly, besides his Wife, he taketh away his Life also: The Devil could say, *Job* 2. 4. *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his Life*; yet, as precious as a man's life is unto him, *David* addeth this injury to the former, taking away his Life also.

Again, *David* sinned not onely against the Husband, but against the Wife also, corrupting her chast mind, and alluring her unto wickedness.

And unto this sin committed against *Urias*, and his wife, I might add the sin against the child begotten in Bastardy: The innocent blood of all those of his Loyal Subjects that

were ſlain with *Urias*; his ſin againſt his own houſe and family; as alſo his tranſgreſſions againſt the whole Church and people of God, laying them open to God's judgements for his ſake. But yet, all theſe ſins againſt men, how great or how grievous ſoever they were, he accompteth them as nothing in compariſon of his ſin againſt God: *Peter*, he muſt have a ſilly cock to remember him of his ſin; *David*, he muſt have a *Nathan* to tell him, ſaying, *Thou art the man*; and therefore, ſaith he, *Againſt thee onely have I ſinned.*

Secondly, I anſwer, that all ſins, of what ſort ſoever they be, they be great ſins, becauſe they be againſt the Law of the Almighty; and were it not for the Law of God forbidding ſin, and commanding Virtue, there ſhould be no ſin: For what is ſin but the tranſgreſſion of the Law of God? and therefore *David* acknowledgeth his ſins were againſt God, he hath rebelled and tranſgreſſed his Law and Commandements: He had not now to do with *Urias*, or any mortal man,

man, but with the juſt and moſt righteous God, whoſe holy Law he hath moſt rebelliouſly broken and violated: For if the Lord hath not forbidden men to commit adultery, it ſhould be no ſin: and if the Lord had not ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not kill*, it were then no more ſin to kill a man, than to kill a dogg: But ſeeing the Law of God forbiddeth it, therefore it is a ſin, and deſerveth eternal damnation, if not repented of. Omiſſion of the duty which God requires at our hands, is as bad as the commiſſion of the act it ſelf; good men will ſtartle at the leaſt ſin, like *Joſeph*, who ſaid, *How can I do this thing, and not ſin againſt God*; God forbid that I ſhould do it; and as God hath forbid us to do this ſin, and many ſuch others, ſo (good God) do thou ſtill forbid us by thy preventing grace, to do it, or the like ſins. Mar. 5. 21.

Seeing all ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the Law of God, whether it be immediately, as the ſins of the firſt table; or mediately, when in ſinning againſt our Brother, we do ſin againſt *God*: It *Doct.* 5. God alone can forgive ſins.

followeth, that God alone can pardon and forgive ſin; for it belongeth to him alone to pardon the fault, againſt whom it was committed: But all ſin is againſt God's Law, therefore he alone can pardon and forgive it. And this is affirmed by the Phariſees, *Luk.* 5. 21. *Who can forgive ſin but God alone?*

No creature hath this power; for he that can forgive ſins and treſpaſſes, muſt be able to take away the puniſhment of ſin, which is Death, Hell, and Damnation. Now then, to ſay, that a man can properly forgive ſin, it is in effect to ſay, that a man hath power over Death and Hell, which cannot poſſibly be.

Doct. 1. Seeing none can pardon ſin but God onely, becauſe all ſin is againſt God alone: No man on earth, no Saint or Angel in Heaven can pardon and forgive ſins, but onely Almighty *God*. This condemneth the blaſphemous and erroneous Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, who do hold, and teach, that the Pope can as truly, and as properly forgive ſins, as God himſelf. This one

one point of Doctrine, taught and held by the Church of *Rome*, doth prove their Pope to be Antichrist. even that Man of sin that the Apostle speaketh of, who makes himself equal to God. And as Almighty God can forgive sin, so will his Holiness forgive sin; and whereas God never gave any sinner pardon of his sins, before they were committed, and repented; yet the Pope can, and doth give out his pardons for a sum of money, for sins past, present, yea, for twenty years to come; for treason, for murder, adultery, yea, any sin. Than which, what can be more blasphemous and dangerous, to give men Licence to commit sin, and open a gap to all manner of Villany? For who will be afraid to sin, if he may have a pardon for sin before it be committed.

Pope Antichrist.

Horrible impiety.

Therefore, when we have committed a sin, let us not think to fly from God, as from a temporal Judge; no, rather run we unto him by our confessing and acknowledging our sins, and then he will forgive us our sins; *for he that hides his sin, shall not*

prosper ; but he that confesseth his sin shall find mercy. We have too little shame in us when we commit sin, and too much shame in us when we confess it : For without confession, repentance is but a dumb shew ; for our confession is a glory to God, and much honour we do unto him by our confession ; but so long as we do not confess our sins, we are aliens and strangers at the Throne of grace and mercy. We must be humbled before we can be honoured ; we must be broken by our repentance, before we can be made vessels of glory. There is commonly a disease, before there can be a cure. All the holy men of God still confessed their sins, before they found favour at God's hand. *David*'s confession was from his heart, it was really, and a true saying, *I have sinned :* For confession without sorrow of heart, is but lip-labour ; so the ear without observing, is but ear-service ; and charity without the heart, is but hand-labour. The Psalmist saith plainly, That *he that doth not confess his sins, shall not prosper :* I say, those that will not repent and

and confeſs their ſins while they live, ſhall one day come with ſhame in their faces, crying to the Hills to cover them, and the Rocks to fall upon them, with fear in their hearts, and a guilty conſcience in their boſoms.

Seeing *David* confeſſeth that he had ſinned againſt *God* alone, he doth acknowledge, though all men ſhould pardon his ſins, and wink at them, yea, ſhould ſeek to flatter him being a King, yet he could not be ſo ſatisfied, becauſe the ſin was againſt God's laws and Commandements; and therefore he ſeeketh to God for pardon: So when we ſin againſt men, offend our neighbour and brother, by lying, adultery, murder, &c. Yet let us know we have to do with God, and though all men ſhould pardon us, and connive at our ſin, yet unleſs the Lord ſeal our pardon, it is not worth a button. When great men ſin by adultery and murder, by oppreſſion and cruelty, they have their claw-backs, and flatterers, who will ſmooth and flatter them, leſſen and excuſe their ſins, yea, ſay all is well done; but alas, when the Law

of God is broken, unleſs he pardons all the flattering and ſmoothing of men, is nothing worth. And let us remember, that though we paſs by our ſins, that they are forgotten; yet they are not like our feeble bodies, which grow weaker and weaker, but they grow, and increaſe, and in time will reach up to Heaven, and cry for vengeance againſt us.

Uſe 3. Seeing all ſin, (to ſpeak properly) is againſt God, becauſe it is the breach of his Law, therefore it followeth, that all the puniſhing of ſin belongs onely to God; He alone is the avenger of ſin: *Vengeance is mine, ſaith the Lord, and I will repay it.* Where the Apoſtle ſheweth, that all puniſhing and revenging of ſin belongs to the Lord alone, becauſe that God alone is the perſon which is wronged and injured, and not man (to ſpeak properly) ſeeing not man's law, but God's law is violated and broken; and if his law were not broken, no man, nor any other Creature ſhould have the leaſt cauſe to complain; and therefore, all puniſhing and vengeance for ſin be-

Rom. 12. 19.

belongeth properly to God, and unto ſuch whom he ſhall appoint to be his Lieutenants on earth, and Miniſters to ſtand in his ſtead to puniſh offences.

And therefore firſt this ſheweth, that thoſe men do much offend, who, when the Law of God is broken by wicked and ungodly men, can wink at their ſins, and will not unſheath the Sword put into their hands, to the end to ſmite the ſame; but can ſuffer many great and horrible ſins to be committed, that the Lord himſelf many times is fain by the Sword, Plague, Peſtilence, or otherwiſe, to execute judgment on ungodly men, ſweeping them away by heaps.

Uſe. 4. This practice of *David* condemns the common practice of the world: If men do ſin, and do ſome evil that is known to the world, what do they then? They preſently ſeek to pacifie the party offended, to ſtay his diſpleaſure, either by money, or by friends, or by ſome other means: But alas, they regard not the anger of God, whoſe Majeſty is offended, and his Law tranſgreſſed. But *David* here acknow-

acknowledgeth, that he had not to do with man, but with God, whose most holy and righteous Law he had broken. And although all men would willingly have pardoned the fault, yet that could not content him, till he had gotten the pardon of God, sealed in the blood of Christ Jesus. So let us, though we must and may labour to be reconciled to men, yet let us look up higher to the hand of God, to be reconciled unto him, to beg pardon at his hands, and to be at one with him. Alas, what shall it boot us to get the King's pardon for murder, adultery, theft, &c. if the King of Heaven pardon not, and do not forgive the same? What if we can appease the anger of man, and be in danger of the just and severe anger of the eternal and everlasting God? And therefore let us go to God, fly unto him, labour for reconciliation with him. For *David*'s sins were seen with the eye of God's providence, and with the eye of justice; for it was God's love to him, to send him this Prophet, to let him know that he had done wickedly,

Note.

ly, there was God's favour: Then to tell him he would punish him, and his people, there was his justice. *David*, after he had cast his eye upon *Bathsheba*, did so study and labour to get her to his will, even as a man in the Summer-time, that will spend a whole day to get a Butter-fly, which obtained, is not worth a man's pains: So it was with *David*; nothing but sorrow came after, nor any quiet rest he found, till he came to ask pardon. He lay, as I said before, ten months in this sleep of sin, which St. *Bernard* said, was a brother to death: But when he knew his errour, he was then glad, and said, the Lord had heard the voice of my weeping; his former mirth is now turned into a river of tears; his sin stopped the grace of God, and hindred his devotion, and made him thus forget himself. *David* had first nature, then grace; first here was darkness, then light; first an evening, then a day. He was in the bed of security and content, till *Nathan*, the light of grace, came and told him, *Thou art the man*. *David* at that time more sensible

sible of sin than grace. *David's* greatest pleasure (as he thought) we see proves his greatest bane and sorrow: *David* all that while had a smiling face, yet had a gnawing worm within him, his Conscience, that did never cease, till it was rooted out; his Sleep was no true rest, but it was like a Drunken man's sleep, which is no true repose, but full of horrour and trouble: Never had he any true sleep. For his little time of pleasure, there followed a world of sorrow, which made him thus to seek to God by prayer and tears, saying, *Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil.*

Object. If any do object, It seemeth that wrongs done to men, are no sins, and not to be repented of.

Answ. *I answer,* That followeth not: For whether the wrong be done directly against God himself, as the Commandements of the first Table concern God; Or, indirectly against God, and directly against our Brother, as all the sins of the second Table concern our brethren: Yet, insomuch as the Law of God is broken, either in the first

first or second Table. Therefore the chiefest fault and wrong is against God himself; yet we are not to think, that offences done against men are no sins, but that we are to be humbled for them; because, in sinning against our Brother, we sin against God, whose law we break: And therefore, we must restore fourfold, we must be reconciled to our Brother, and seek to right wrongs done unto him. Thus much of the Person, to whom *David* confesseth: Not to any Massprieſt, but to God alone, who alone was offended, and who alone can pardon his great fault.

Now in the second place, we are to come unto the thing confessed, namely, his particular sins and impieties: *And done this evil in thy sight.* In the former words, *I have sinned*, he spake more generally; in these words he points out his particular and special sin: *And done this evil*, adultery, and murder, *in thy sight.*

Mark what is that which most wounds *David's* conscience, and troubles his mind; not so much the fear of

of ſhame and reproach in the World, nor yet the fear of puniſhment; but his ſin, his vile ſin, it is it that wounds him, that galls him, and doth kill his heart, and grieves his poor ſoul: *Againſt thee, againſt thee have I ſinned*; as if he ſhould have ſaid, O my God, it grieves me exceedingly, and wounds my heart, that ever I ſhould be ſo vile, to ſin againſt thee my gracious and merciſull God: I care not for the ſhame of the World, or fear of puniſhment; but my ſin, my ſin is that which doth wound me, and gripeth me at the heart, and hath made that partition wall between me and thy ſaving grace. *David*, when he had committed this ſin of Adultery and Murder, and was ſo long tied with the fetters of the fleſh for the ſpace of ten months, that he ſaw not his ſin; yet God of his mercy and love preſently diſpatches and ſends grace into his heart, and opens the eyes of his reaſon, and cauſes him to have compunction and ſorrow of heart, in theſe words, ſaying, *I have ſinned*; *againſt thee only have I ſinned.*

So

So that our leſſon is this, That the child of God that truly repents, nothing more grieveth him than ſin, becauſe it is ſin, and breaks the Law of God; he is more grieved for ſin, than either for ſhame or puniſhment.

Uſe 5. Well, ſeeing this is true repentance, to be grieved for ſin, and that, more than for all other things; not for fear of ſhame, or the puniſhment ſo much, as becauſe it offends a mercifull God and loving Father. Let us try our repentance; Art thou grieved more for ſin than any thing elſe, becauſe it offendeth God, and diſpleaſeth him? and couldſt thou mourn for ſin, if there were no ſhame nor puniſhment, hell nor judgment? It is a certain ſign of true repentance; but alas, thoſe that can weep for fear of ſhame and puniſhment for ſin, many times are nothing at all grieved for ſin, in regard of God, whoſe moſt holy and perfect Law is broken; and therefore their repentance is not ſound. We muſt labour for true remorſe and ſorrow, and not forget our ſins; we muſt call to mind every night what we

we have done in the day, what we have committed, and what we have omitted; this is the way to repent.

Doct. 5. Acknowledgment of particular sins required.

Mark how *David* doth not onely in general acknowledge his sin, but he points out his particular evil, and special sin of close adultery and murder, *I have done this evil*, (this grievous sin) *in thy sight*. *David* found the depth of God's mercies by his confessing of his sins; for he waded through the sea of God's judgments, as a Lamb through a shallow brook of water: Howsoever (saith he) I laboured to smother and hide it, yet thou wast an eye-witness, and very privy unto it. So then hence we may learn, That in true repentance, there must be an acknowledgment and confession of our particular sins, and offences, that we may say, *I have sinned, and done this evil in thy sight*; Lying, Stealing, Drunkenness, Whoredome, Murder, &c. We must come to particular and special sins; *David* he

2 Ch. 21. Ezr. 9. acknowledgeth his particular sins, of numbring the people, and of marching with the uncircumcised Nations.

David

David seeing he had no way to satisfie this trespass, nor cure his wounded conscience, immediately makes his address to the Lord: saying, O Lord, give me now Celestial comfort, such as the world cannot afford me, which I so doted on, for I know now mine own weakness and infirmity, which thou hast revealed unto me in mercy; and now I am more sensible of my own miserable estate, than ever I was before; which I have committed in thy sight.

And thus do the people of *Israel* deal in their Conversion, 1 *Sam.* 12. 19. *Pray for thy servants to the Lord that we dye not; for we have sinned in asking us a King, besides all our other sins.* So the Apostle *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. declareth there, that many things troubled him; yet this especially, that he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and oppressour, not worthy to be called an Apostle. This appeareth likewise by the example of the *Jews*, *Act.* 2. As also in the conversion of *Zacheus*, *Luk.* 19. who having been a griper, and an oppressour, offered to make

make full restitution: So that we see it is a certain note of true repentance, to be touched with the feeling of a man's particular sins committed against God.

Seeing *David*, and all the servants of God, when they have been truly humbled, have repented, and confessed their particular sins unto the Lord; this shews most men and women have not true repentance, but onely the shadow of it. Alas, the vilest Atheist in the world, a Reprobate, and one that shall never be saved, may confess this in a general and confused way, We are all sinners; but if we will truly repent indeed, we must look to confess our particular sins, to find them out one by one, and to acknowledge them unto the Lord with grief and sorrow, and hatred of them; but alas, most men and women can content themselves in general termes, to confess they be all offenders, although they know in particular wherein they have offended; yea, if they be examined in particular, they do think they keep all the Commande-

mandements of God: Some think every ſigh and ſorrow, or a tear ſhed, is repentance, but ſo ſhould Worldlings repent; ſome think every little pang and croſs in the world for ſin is repentance, then ſhould *Pharaoh* repent; ſome think that a little weeping and lamenting for ſin is repentance, then ſhould *Cain*, *Eſau*, *Judas*, repent; ſome think that a days humbling of themſelves, or a days faſting is repentance, but ſo ſhould *Ahab* repent; ſome think that good Works, and a little Alms-deeds, upon their Death-beds, is repentance, ſo ſhould every ſick man repent at his leiſure: Some think that to cry God mercy, or the Lord have mercy upon them, is repentance, ſo ſhould every fool repent. See therefore how many are deceived in their repentance; *David's* Repentance was different from theſe, for he changed his mind, ſaying, in the 119. Pſal. 59. v. *I have conſidered my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies.*

But we muſt uncaſe our ſelves, and uncover our particular ſins, if we would

would have God to cover them with the Robe of Christ's righteousness: The eye cannot see it self, it is true; if we keep and hide our sins within us, we shall never see the danger which will befall us: So if a sick man come to the Physitian, and onely tell him he is sick, and never shew him his particular grief, and disease that troubleth him, and the manner thereof, with all the Circumstances belonging to the same, he can never look to be cured: So, if we come to God, the Physitian of our souls, and say onely, *We have sinned*, we cannot assure our selves of pardon; our unknown sins we must therefore confess generally; but our known sins we must confess particularly, as the Prophet *David* here doth, *And done this evil:* So in the first book of the *Chron.* chap. 12. *I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing*, that is, Numbring of the people. So that we see it stands us greatly in hand, even with grief of heart to confess our particular sins, and to give sentence against our own selves, and to pray as for

for life and death for the pardon of them, otherwiſe our repentance is, as it were but in ſhew, and for faſhion ſake, which is never acceptable with Almighty God.

Seeing then it is neceſſary in true repentance, to ſeek out our ſpecial ſins, and particular evils and impieties: We ſee that it ſtands us in hand to be throughly acquainted with the Law of God; for by the knowledge of the Law comes the knowledge of ſin, and that man that hath the beſt inſight in the Law of God, hath the greateſt ſight of his ſin, and of his miſery, and is moſt humbled and moſt ſtirred up to ſeek to God for mercy; and they which have leaſt knowledge of the Law, know leaſt of their ſins and miſery, and are moſt proud, and leaſt humbled, neither can they truly repent. *Uſe 2.*

For as a ſick man is then moſt dangerouſly ſick, when he hath no feeling of his infirmity; ſo a ſinner is then in the greateſt miſery, when he thinketh himſelf to be no ſinner: Such a one is far off from mourning and

and ſorrowing for ſin, from turning from them, and returning to God, ſeeing he taketh himſelf to be in good caſe, and to ſtand in need of no repentance. And ſuch were the Phariſees in the days of Chriſt, whom he reproved, *Matth. 9. 12. The whole need not the Phyſitiaa, but thoſe that are ſick. I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.*

And done this evil in thy ſight.

1. SIn may well be called an evil, becauſe it is the cauſe of all evil, both in ſoul and body; for all judgements, plagues, and puniſhments, be but the fruits that come of ſin; ſickneſs, poverty, plague, peſtilence, ſhame, wars, all judgements be the fruits of ſin.

2. Secondly, becauſe ſin doth diſpleaſe God, and offendeth his divine Majeſty; therefore it is called an evil of evils.

3. Thirdly, becauſe this evil of ſin infects heaven and earth, and brings evil to the creatures of God under Heaven.

Uſe 1. Well, ſeeing ſin is an evil, it diſpleaſeth God, it brings all puniſhments, yea, eternal death in the world

to

to come; and seeing it infects heaven and earth with the poison of it, how should we hate and abhor sin, quake at it, be afraid to commit that which is the cause of all evils: But alas, though sin be the cause of all evil, yet we see men fear not sin, they shun it not; yea, they which do fear fire and water, plague and pestilence, yet dare be doing and tempering with sin, as if there were no evil nor danger in it. But if thus we be wise, let us fly sin above all other evils whatsoever; and in so doing, if we fly this evil of sin, we shall prevent many other judgments and evils, which are the fruits of sin.

[*In thy sight, or before thine eyes.*] As if *David* should have said, O Lord my God, though I did commit adultery never so closely, and caused *Urias* secretly to be slain; yet alas, I see all I did, was manifest before thine eyes, and could not be hidden from thy sight.

Howsoever men and women sin never so closely and secretly, yet they sin before the face of the Lord, even in

Doct. 6. Men sin before God.

his eyes, and under his nose, the Lord standing by and looking upon them. Neither distance of place, nor secret corner, neither darkness of the night, nor any device and shift of man whatsoever, is able to cover our sins from God's eyes; there is no creature which is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open before his eyes, with whom we have to do. It is true indeed, it is an easie matter to blear the eyes of man, to sin so closely and secretly, that no man shall know it; in some dark night, for to steal, lye, commit adultery; but although all Men and Angels be ignorant, yet our most secret and evil sins are all naked unto the Almighty's eyes.

Ps. 139. Heb. 4. 13

Use 2. Oh that all men could be perswaded of this Doctrine, that we ever sin in the Lord's sight; when we lye, as *Ananias* did; or steal with *Achan*, commit adultery with *David*, that the Lord doth see us, and his fiery eyes behold us, and the Lord even then stands at our elbows, and looks upon us. *Joseph* no sooner became a Courtier, but presently learns to swear by

by the life of *Pharaoh*: How should this be but a blessed means to bridle men, and to restrain them from many secret and hidden sins? What man durst be so bold and desperate to cut a purse when he sees the Judges eyes set on him, and beholdeth him? And what man is so desperate, that durst steal, lye, commit adultery, if he knew that the all-seeing and piercing eyes of this great God did behold him, and look upon him? This doth the Lord God tell the seven Church of *Asia*, in every Epistle, *I know thy works*. Oh then let the remembrance of this make us watchfull and wary, to look unto our ways, to live as ever in God's presence. Rev. 2.

Use 2. Here is matter of comfort and incouragement unto the children of God, for as the Lord sees and beholdeth all the evils and sins of men and women, to judge and to punish them; all is naked to his piercing and all-seeing eyes: So likewise all our good deeds and virtues are known & seen of God, *I know thy works*; all thou dost, both good and bad, I know all. Now then,

the Lord doth take knowledge of all our works, and ſees them; yea, there is nothing we do, but it is manifeſt in his eyes: We know he is a bountifull God, and plenteouſly rewards all that love and fear him; yea, he will not leave a cup of cold water without a reward. O then, let us proceed and abound in good works, in knowledge, faith, repentance, patience, obedience, humility, zeal, love, &c. for the Lord knows, and ſees all, and will not let any one good work go unrewarded.

Now follows the ſecond part of the Verſe, containing a reaſon why the Prophet *David* did thus acknowledge and confeſs his ſins, and humbled himſelf for them; namely, that by this means he might clear the Lord of all injuſtice, and hard dealing in word or deed: As if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord, I confeſs, that ſeeing I have ſo grievouſly ſinned againſt thee, there is no cauſe why I ſhould ſo much as accuſe thee of the leaſt cruelty, injuſtice, or hard dealing with me, either in the terrible threatnings

nings by thy servant *Nathan*, or thy righteous judgement in taking away the child conceived in Adultery; for I acknowledge that I have deserved far more grievous plagues and punishments for this my vile and grievous sin. And therefore, by this my confession, I do clear thee, O Lord, of all injustice and cruel dealing, and condemn my self to be worthy of far more grievous judgements and punishments for my sins, as all the world may see, and know, that thou art most just in all thy threatnings denounced against sin, and most pure and righteous in all thy judgements and fatherly chastisements.

That thou maist be just.

THat is, that thou maist be known just in thy Works, and all the world may see, and know, that there is great and just cause of thy threatning against sin, and sinners. Now, what these speeches were, and the judgments threatned against *David*, look in the 2 Book of *Samuel*, ch. 12. v. 10. First, that the Sword should never depart from his house, but one Son should

kill another. Secondly, that the child conceived in adultery, ſhould dye. Thirdly, that his own Son ſhould rebell againſt him. And laſtly, that his Wives ſhould be abuſed, as he had abuſed another mans.

Doct. 7 The Lord maketh good uſe of our conſcience.

Hence mark, what uſe the Lord will make even of an accuſing and guilty conſcience: Namely, it ſhall not onely be the Accuſer, Witneſs, and Judge to accuſe and condemn it ſelf, but ſhall clear the Lord of all injuſtice, and hard dealing, making way unto the Lord's righteous judgement. This we may clearly behold in *Judas*, *Mat.* ch. 27. who readeth his own ſentence of condemnation againſt himſelf, ſaying, *I have ſinned in betraying the innocent blood.* And for this purpoſe, the Lord hath put into the ſoul of every man, not onely a knowledge, whereby we can diſcern betwixt that which is lawful and good, from that which is evil, ſo far as ſhall leave all men without excuſe: But alſo, that conſcience can make application of that knowledge in all the actions of a man's life.

life, approving that which is good, and therein conceiveth matter of joy and comfort; or elſe condemning him for that which is evil, which will cauſe a fearfull horrour in ſoul, as we ee in *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. trembling in body, as in *Felix*, *Act.* 24. 26. or elſe earfull dreams and viſions, as in *Balazar*, *Dan.* 5. And this we may clearly behold in *David*, the force of whoſe conſcience was ſuch, as that it ſought no ſtarting holes to hide it ſelf; but ſaith, *Againſt thee, againſt thee onely have I ſinned, &c.* And withall doth clear the Lord of all injuſtice, and hard dealing towards him, if he ſhould bring upon him and his houſe, all thoſe fearfull judgments, which by *Nathan* the Lord's Prophet, he had threatned againſt him, 2 *Sam.* 12. Indeed ſin and ſorrow are two twins, like *Jacob* and *Eſau*, one follows on the neck of another: And therefore let *Nathan*'s information of God's judgments againſt *David*, work our reformation; for by our confeſſion, (as *David* did) we pacifie God's wrath, and divert his judgments from us.

Use 1. From this we learn, what an intollerable torment a wicked conscience is, even a Gibbet, and a Rack to wound a man withall, and as a fearfull hue and cry every where overtaking him, giving a man no rest neither night nor day, but every where, and in all places, is ever dragging him before the Judge. No sooner did *Paul* dispute of Justice, Temperance, and Judgment to come, but *Felix* trembled, *Act.* 24. No sooner had *Cain* slain his righteous brother *Abel*, but his guilty conscience made his countenance to fall, *Gen.* 4. What marvel is it then, if the wicked should stifle and hinder the checks of their consciences, being so fearfull and terrible? But this they cannot do. Which being so, Oh! in the fear of God, let every one take heed of sin, for the motions thereof may well be compared to those Locusts of the bottomless pit, *Rev.* 9. having faces like men, and their hair like the hair of a woman; but a tail like a Scorpion, which stingeth to death. Oh! full little doth many a poor soul think, that that sin which now seemeth to

to be as light as a feather, ſhould lye ſo heavy upon his ſoul in the end.

This teacheth moreover, to be very carefull, that we neglect not the checks of conſcience, nor our own hearts reproving us of our ways, ſo time cometh apace, and thou knoweſt not how ſoon that Conſcience of thine, which now doth check thee, ſhall then judge thee; and that hear of thine, which now doth reprov thee, ſhall torment thee: And thou by it ſhalt be accuſed and convicted, that thou haſt been a wilfull chooſer of thine own deſtruction. *Uſe* 2.

Again, in that the Prophet doth acknowledge, that if the Lord ſhould bring upon him all thoſe juſt judgeme ſ which he before had threatned by the Prophet *Nathan*, namely, 1 *Sam.* 12. *That the Sword ſhould never depart from his houſe, that the child conceived in Adultery ſhould dye, that his Sons ſhould deflour his Wives, &c.* yet for all that, that *God* were moſt juſt in his judgements. We learn a ſecond point of Doctrine, that howſoever the Lord reproveth us for ſin, and ſeem *Doct.* 2. God is ever juſt in his judgements.

to threaten and thunder out judgements, as he did againſt *Pharaoh*, yet we are to confeſs that God is juſt, and righteous in his threatnings; that he deals not more ſeverely with us than our ſins do deſerve: This *David* did, though he was a King; yet having ſinned, and committed evil in God's ſight, when *Nathan* came, and took him up roundly for his ſins, he acknowledged God dealt juſtly with him, though he rebuked him ſharply and ſoundly: So muſt we know it is our duty, that when we are reproved for our ſins, we judge and imagine, it is no more than we have deſerved. Old *Ely*, when *Samuel* told him, that God would deſtroy his Sons, and take the high Prieſts office from him, becauſe he did not rule and govern his children, and correct them: He anſwered, *It is the good Lord, let him do as it ſeemeth good in his eyes*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. *David* did ſwim in a *Jordan* of ſweet waters, a great while as he thought, but at length he came to the troubled waters of *Mara*, even ſorrow and tears for his ſins paſt, and by his true con-

contrition, and hearty ſorrow of unfeigned tears, he quenched God's wrath which was denounced againſt him; and for one ounce of pleaſure which he had, and enjoyed, he had a pound of ſorrow; for he wept, and watered his couch with his tears.

In like ſort, *Mat.* 15. the *Canaanitiſh* woman, though ſhe were called a Dog by our Saviour, yet ſhe juſtified him in his ſaying, *Truth Lord*, I am as thou haſt ſaid; but yet, admit I be a Dog, then give me that which Doggs oftentimes have, even a crum of thy mercy. Thus did *Hezekiah*, 2 *King.* 29. when the Prophet had threatned him becauſe of his pride, in ſhewing his treaſures, he confeſſeth, that God was juſt, and might have dealt yet more rigorouſly with him, ſaying, *The word of the Lord is good.* Theſe examples do ſhew, what is the nature of true penitents; namely, to acknowledge that which from God's Word is moſt ſeverely and ſharply ſpoken, to be juſt and true. Whereas on the contrary, we ſhall ſee Hypocrites ready to cenſure God, to deal

too

too ſeverely with them, as we may read, *Luk.* 13. how that the wicked at the laſt, will ſeem to plead their caſe with God, ſaying, *Lord, haſt thou not preached in our ſtreets, and have we not eat and drunk in thy company?* Seeming thereby, to have ſuch an intereſt in Chriſt, as that he ſhould deal unjuſtly with them to condemn them. The like we may ſee in *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. *My ſin*, ſaith he, that is, my puniſhment, *is greater than I can bear.* So that we ſee, that as the righteous man acknowledge God to be juſt in all things, ſo the wicked man dare charge God to his face, that he is unjuſt, if he puniſh ſin ſeverely.

Uſe 1. This ſheweth, of what ſpirit thoſe men be of, who, when they be ſharply reproved for their ſins, as ſwearing, drunkenneſs, whoredome, covetouſneſs, &c. they begin to murmur and grudge, to find fault with the Miniſters of God, that they be too hot, and too earneſt, too ſharp and ſevere; they would be more mildly dealt withall: They cannot abide theſe hot fellows, that be all of the Spirit, they would

would be handled nicely and gently. But we ſee, *David*, a King, acknowledgeth God to be juſt, and to deal juſtly with him. But theſe men are like unto *Ahab*, he hated *Michajah*; and why? becauſe he never propheſied good unto him, but ever told him of God's judgments; and therefore he could not away with him: But let us know, that it is a bad property, and a ſign of a moſt lewd and graceleſs heart, *Thou hateſt to be reformed.* The vileſt Atheiſt in the World, will be content to hear the Goſpel; but let us know, that we muſt be content to hear of God's judgments. *Herod* could be content to hear *John Baptiſt* gladly, untill he came for to touch his hainous ſin, which was a ſign he had a naughty heart. But *David* could wiſh the righteous might ſmite him friendly, and reprove him; for ſuch ſmiting ſhould be good for him.

Pſ. 50.5.

Iſa. 58.1. Mar.6.10

Pſ. 141.

Let us learn by *David's* example, quietly and patiently to hear of our ſins, and to hear God's judgments denounced againſt them: And let us deem it a ſingular favour of God, if the

Uſe 2 Faithfull Miniſters a token of God's love.

the Lord ſend ſome godly *Nathan* to tell us of our ſins, and to thunder out God's judgements againſt them; it is a ſign the Lord loveth us, and would not have us to periſh. And therefore, let us be ſo far from murmuring, or diſliking the Lord's Miniſters, for telling us of our ſins, that we ſhould rather love them, and like them: Yea, *David* loved *Nathan* above all other men, becauſe that he was a means to reclaim him, and bring him home again by true repentance. And ſo it is with all God's children, that thoſe faithfull Miniſters of the Word, which have been the means to humble them, and caſt them down from their ſins, of all other they love them, and make much of them. *David* did not put off his repentance, or delay it, ſaying, I will hear of it ſome other time, as King *Agrippa* did; no, he knew by God's grace, that the preſent occaſion was the fitteſt opportunity for a ſinner to repent, not to put it off till the morrow; for we have no time which we can call our own, but this minute, this preſent time; for who knoweth,

Pſ. 142.

knoweth, whether he ſhall ſee the next Sun riſing, yea or no?

Seeing when *Nathan* reproved *David*, he acknowledgeth it to be the Lord's rebuking of him; it muſt admoniſh all men to liſten unto the word of God in the mouths of his Miniſters, as though the Lord himſelf ſhould ſpeak unto them; for they ſtand in his ſtead, and whatſoever they ſpeak in the name of the Lord, it is as much as if the Lord himſelf ſhould ſpeak from Heaven: And therefore Chriſt ſaith, *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me: And he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* And therefore, let us take to heart the judgments God threatned by his Miniſters: Let us make a good uſe of them; and let us aſſure our ſelves, that unleſs we do repent, they will ſeize upon us: and therefore let all ungodly men take heed how they revile God's faithfull Miniſters, when they deal ſoundly and roundly, ſincerely and ſharply with them for ſin: Thou ſtriveſt not with man, but with God.

Uſe 3. God ſpeaketh by his Miniſters.

Luk. 16.

And

And pure when thou judgest.

THat is, that thou maist be known to be pure, and free from all cruelty and unjustice in thy judgements, when thou dost chasten man for sin: We must needs acknowledge that thou art just, and dost never deal so hardly with us as we deserve.

For himself he confesseth, that *God* is most just: That howsoever the Lord might bring upon him all those heavy judgements, which he had threatned by his holy Prophet against him, *viz.* That evil should be raised against him out of his own house. That the sword should be sent against it. That his wives should be openly defiled. That the child, born in adultery, should dye. Yet, though all those things should come upon him and his house, the Lord should still be free from cruelty and injustice.

Use 1. By this example of *David*, we may learn to free the Lord from all cruel, hard, and unjust dealing: That although the Lord bring upon us many and grievous judgements, sickness, poverty, imprisonment, plague, famine,

mine, ſword, peſtilence, &c. yet let us take it ſo to heart, that ever we do acknowledge God is free from all cruel and unjuſt dealing. A moſt lively example of this we have in the people of the *Jews*, whom the Lord had grievouſly afflicted for the contempt of his Word, and deſpiſing the Prophet, ſent them into a great captivity: Now being there, they do not complain of any unjuſt dealing of God towards them; but confeſs rather, *That it was his endleſs mercy that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſion fails not.* The like example we have in *Job*, who never charged God of any unjuſt dealing. And to the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks the Church, *Mic.* 7. 9. *I will bear the wrath of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.*

Dan. 9. 5, 6, 7.

Lam. 3. 22.

Job 1. 22.

Hence we are taught, whatſoever croſs or judgment the Lord ſhall lay upon us, to undergo the ſame without murmuring or repining againſt God; for in all theſe things God is moſt righteous, and layeth nothing on us, which we have not deſerved. Let us therefore learn with *David*, to be

Uſe 1.

be dumb and silent under the hand of God, whatsoever we suffer, because God hath done it, and we have deserved it. But alas, how far is this from those men, who, when they are crossed, are ready to break into cursing and swearing, &c. or at least fret, and repine against God, as if he had done them wrong in punishing them.

Use 2. This condemns that great impatiency of many a one, that, when the Lord doth exercise them by sickness, by poverty, by crosses in wife or children, &c. are ready to murmur and complain, that the Lord dealeth hardly with them, so that they dare reason and dispute with God. This was *Job*'s case in his extremity, he forgot himself, and spake foolishly. Nay, rather let us with *David* confess and acknowledge, that it is the just hand of God, and that he doth us no wrong, although he send many and long afflictions upon us: Let us confess, it is his mercy that he sends no more; yea, let us acknowledge, that we are worthy ten thousand times to perish for our sins, and to be damned eternally.

Job 13. 15.
Dan. 9.

And

And if the Lord ſhould for evermore condemn us, yet he ſhould be juſt.

Uſe 3. This condemns all thoſe proud ſpirits, who dare charge the Lord of great cruelty and hardneſs, if he ſhould reject the greateſt part of Mankind, and damn them for their ſins; they think it ſtands not with God's mercy ſo to do; but as the Apoſtle *Paul* in the 11 Chapter to the *Romans* ſaith, *What art thou, O man, that dareſt diſpute with God?* Yea, it is therefore juſt becauſe God willeth it; for his Will is the rule of Juſtice: And therefore any thing is juſt, becauſe he wills it; and therefore let us not only in our own particular croſſes and calamities, acknowledge God to be juſt, but alſo in the matter of reprobation, and rejection, let us acknowledge Almighty God to be moſt juſt and righteous: *Let God be true; and every man a liar.*

Note.

Uſe 4. Seeing the Lord is pure and juſt, free from all cruel and hard dealing in word or deed; let us labour to be like unto him, let us be juſt in our word, and juſt in our deed, ſhun all unjuſt, cruel, and mercileſs dealing to our brethren;

thren; take heed of lying, deceiving, and unjuſt and cruel dealing in buying and ſelling. Let us imitate God our heavenly Father, *be ye holy as he is holy*, juſt, righteous, pure, as he is pure. For if we ſhall be either unjuſt, unrighteous, impure, given to cruelty, hard, and mercileſs dealing, we ſhall be moſt unlike to God, and be more like the Devil, who is a liar, and the father of lies; a murderer, and a cruel blood-ſhedder from the beginning.

VERSE V.

Behold, I was born in iniquity, and in ſin hath my mother conceived me.

David confeſſeth his original ſin, as the fountain of all ſins.

IN this Verſe, and the next that followeth, the Prophet amplifieth the confeſſion of his ſins. Firſt, from the original and fountain of the ſame: Namely, his natural ſin, wherein he was conceived and born. Secondly, from the moſt holy and pure Nature, in which God hath created him; againſt which, he ſets his own corrupt and defiled Nature. Thirdly, by that knowledge where-

with

with the Lord had indued him, because God had powred into his heart, and made known unto him his Will by his Word, more than to many others; and made him capable of the heavenly and saving Knowledge of his Will.

Behold.

THis word doth not always note some strange thing, but likewise sometimes pointeth out some special thing worthy to be marked, and, that ought to be learned of all men: For I have observed it to be repeated in the Sacred Scriptures, at the least two hundred several times, from the Alpha of *Genesis*, to the Omega of the *Revelations*. *Behold*, it is a word of comfort, and imports much good to the hearers; it is like a Beacon set upon a Hill, that gives warning when it is kindled, to all that behold it, to look about them: It is a word of consolation; for the Angels said, *Behold, fear not, for I bring you glad tydings of peace: Behold, this is a day of great joy to all people.*

The meaning of the Word.

I was born in iniquity.

AS if he ſhould have ſaid; O Lord, I confeſs, that I was not onely defiled with ſin, when I committed that foul ſin of Adultery, but even ſo ſoon as ever I came into the World, and ſaw the light of the Sun, I was polluted with ſin from the top to the toe.

And in ſin hath my Mother conceived me.

THat is not onely when I firſt came into the world, but even ſo ſoon as I was incloſed, and conceived in my Mother's womb, even then I was ſtained, both in ſoul and body, with ſin: So that the Prophet *David* ſpeaketh here of that Original ſin, wherein he was both bred and born, and wherein he was defiled both in ſoul and body: And this Original ſin, it was the root and ſpawn of his other ſins.

The neceſſity of this doctrine of original ſin.

Behold.

THis word ſheweth, that this Doctrine of Original ſin, is a point neceſſary to be known and learned of all men, and ſuch a point as none

none ſhould be ignorant of; becauſe a man can never throughly know his own miſery, till he come to know even his Original ſin, wherein he was both bred and born; to know, that by Nature, even ſo ſoon as we are born, yea, conceived in the womb, we be but a lump and maſs of ſin, and by nature the children of wrath, by the diſobedience of our firſt Parents *Adam* and *Eve*. Eph. 2.2.

And this is true of all, (without exception) high and low, rich and poor, noble or ſimple; for thus doth *David* confeſs himſelf, *I was born in iniquity, and in ſin hath my mother conceived me.* If in ſin, then in God's wrath, and in danger of eternal condemnation. If any ask, how can this be? I anſwer, Every man is guilty of *Adam*'s great ſin, and alſo tainted Originally with all corruption, with a proneneſs unto all iniquity. Therefore it followeth, in equity and juſtice, that every man is born under the wrath and curſe of God.

And yet conſider, how few obſerve this point of Doctrine concerning Origi-

Original sin, not one of a hundred. O then, let us labour to see in what a blessed estate we were at first created; and withall, how we be defiled and stained by the fall of *Adam*, and now by nature are but a very lump of sin and pollution, that so we may labour to recover that former estate again, by Water, and the Spirit, which is the Regeneration.

Gen. 8. 12. Job 41. 4. Joh. 3. 6.

Doct. 1 What need we have to look into our nature.

Seeing *David* thus repenting of his actual sin of adultery and murder, doth come to find out the root and ground of it, his Original sin, and corruption of nature: We learn, That a man doth never truly repent of any one crime, unless withall he come to find out other sins whereof he is guilty; yea, till he can descend to the very fountain and mother sin: Namely, corruption of nature, and original sin; that is, that pollution of soul and body, wherein we are bred and born. For here, *David* doth not speak of some one or two sins, but now he confesseth, that he is even a mass of corruption, and a lump of all uncleanness, and from top to

Ephes. 2. Joh. 3. 6.

to toe is defiled with ſin. Even ſo now man doth truly repent, till he can acknowledge that he is born in ſin; yea, as it were a lump and maſs of all uncleanneſs; and every particular ſin we fall into, ſhould put us in mind of this natural pollution; that we are nothing elſe but a very lump of ſin, and that by nature there is in us nothing that good is, but ſin and corruption.

And as it was in *David*, when he repented of his Adultery, he comes to other ſins, even to the root and ſpawn of all: So it is in every true repentant ſinner, he that is wounded for one ſin, and repents of that truly, he repents of all, he is humbled for all his ſins, and in the end comes with *David*, to ſee that he is but a lump of ſin, and maſs of all pollution; and indeed a true converſion of a ſinner muſt begin in the heart, as it did with *David*: It was not forced from *David* to confeſs his ſin, for a forced confeſſion is not ſo good, to leave ſin when we cannot commit it longer; no, *David* ſaid, *Behold, I was born in ſin.*

Then *David* doth confeſs here,

Doct. 5. By nature no man is born the child of God.

Ep. 1.23. Ge. 8.21. Joh. 3.6. Joh. 10. Gen. 5.3.

that he was even conceived in ſin; that is, ſo ſoon as ever he was incloſed in his Mother's womb, he was polluted with ſin and natural corruption. We ſee, that no man by nature is born the child of God, but by nature we are all the children of wrath; yea, we are by nature a lump of ſin, a maſs of all uncleanneſs and corruption: Our minds are full of blindneſs, our wills of diſobedience, and our affections full of naughtineſs and untowardneſs; yea, by original ſin, we are guilty of the wrath of God, and in danger of hell and damnation, worthy to periſh for ever.

Yea, by nature there is no difference between the Elect and the Reprobate, neither in outward or in inward diſpoſition, untill God make it by grace. *Paul*, as bloody a perſecutor as ever was *Domitian* or *Julian*; *Zachens*, as unconſcionable and covetous a Worldling, as was that rich Glutton, damned in Hell, *Luk.* 16. and *Luk.* 19. All men are alike by nature, before that grace makes a difference.

Uſe 1. Seeing all men by nature are the children

children of wrath, and heirs of God's vengeance, in danger to be damned, and worthy to periſh eternally in Hell fire for ever: Then he that dyeth in the ſtate of nature, cannot be ſaved, and come to Life eternal; but living and dying a natural man, muſt needs be damned and dye eternally. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdome of God.* Joh. 3. Again, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh.* Luk. 13. 5. And therefore, ſo long as we continue in the ſtate of nature, being conceived and born in ſin, we are in a moſt miſerable and deſperate eſtate.

For the poyſon of our nature is the ſame in us, that is in the wicked, and by nature we are prone to all manner of ſin: And howſoever, by the ſpecial mercy of God, we have eſcaped many horrible and grievous ſins, which we find that the wicked oft have fallen into; it is not, for that we are of a purer nature than they; (for it is alike with the Peprobate) but becauſe the poyſoned corruption thereof hath not yet diſcovered it ſelf in us, which we have juſt cauſe every day to fear.

On then let us labour to get out of this curſed ſtate of nature, and get into the ſtate of grace, to be born anew, to become new Creatures in Chriſt Jeſus, to repent, to ſeek to Jeſus Chriſt for mercy; for if we live, and dye in the ſtate of Nature, it is impoſſible we ſhould be ſaved: And therefore, the eſtate of all carnal men and women, which are meerly natural, howſoever civil, and honeſt, are in a fearfull eſtate and condition; for all this while they do nothing but ſin: All the actions of a natural man be ſo many ſins unto him; as Prayer, hearing the Word, receiving the Sacraments, and the like; for before any of theſe ſacrifices can be accepted of God, their perſons muſt firſt be approved.

Gen. 4.

Uſe 2. Seeing that all of us be conceived in ſin, and ſtained with Original uncleanneſs, and therefore are not onely ſubject to the curſe of God, but even polluted in ſoul and body, blind in our minds, rebellious in our wills and affections: Then thoſe men who ſtand upon their own wit, and wiſdome, and

and care not for the Word of God preached, ſhew that they be in a miſerable caſe: All the knowledge, wit, and ſtrength of nature, cannot bring a man to Heaven, and to Life eternal: And the reaſon is, *The natural man perceiveth not the things that are of God.* Again, *when as the world could not know God in the wiſdome of God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching, to ſave them that believe:* And therefore let us renounce ourſelves, our natural wiſdome, ſtrength and goodneſs, and become fools in our ſelves, that we may be wiſe in God; abhor our ſelves, and our own goodneſs, and labour to be found righteous in Chriſt's Righteouſneſs. *Paul* confeſſeth, *That in me there dwelleth no good thing*, we cannot think a good thought, much leſs do any good, till we be illuminated by the Word and Spirit, enlightned and ſanctified.

1 Cor. 1. 10.
1 Cor. 3. 21.
Rom. 8. 8.
Gen. 8. 11
Rom. 7. 7.

Then we may perceive that the Doctrine of the Papiſts, that man hath natural free will, and by virtue of that can do ſome good to pleaſe God, and can keep the Law, and

Uſe 3.

merit Life eternal, that is moſt falſe; for all men be conceived in iniquity, ſtark dead in tranſgreſſions, have no power to do good things, but are prone to all evil and corruption: For a man hath no free-will in any thing that is good, and leadeth to Life eternal, but all to evil.

And in ſin hath my mother conceived me.

HErein we may note the greatneſs of *Adam*'s fall, and the ſin of our firſt Parents, who did not onely bring the curſe of God upon themſelves, but upon all their poſterity; and did not onely defile themſelves, but all that ſhould come of them. For *Adam* did not fall as a private man, but as the main root and ſtock of all mankind; and we all fell in him, becauſe we were all in his loins. And therefore, ſeeing ſuch is the greatneſs of *Adam*'s fall, we ought to be humbled for it, and daily to bewail it; becauſe if he had not tranſgreſſed, then we ſhould not have been conceived in ſin, nor loſt the image of God, wherein we were at firſt created in holineſs and righteouſneſs:

And

And withall we muſt labour to be renewed daily, and to have the image of Almighty God reſtored, by dying to ſin, and living to righteouſneſs; that we may be holy as God is holy, and righteous as God is righteous. God is unchangable, and yet our ſins can change him; yea, from being our friend, to be our enemy. Man, by the power of ſin, can turn good into evil, and light into darkneſs; and man falling into ſin, doth caſt himſelf into the pit of deſtruction. Let us take notice, that puniſhments are proportioned and provided for them, according to the meaſure of grace which was given them by God at firſt.

Doct. 7. Godly parents beget ſinfull children.

We ſee, that our natural Parents, though they be holy, and ſuch as believe, yet they beget children in ſin and uncleanneſs, and do convey original ſin unto their children; they do warm them with unclean blood, and ſo by that means do make them children of wrath, and heirs of God's anger, and in ſtate of damnation. For believing Parents beget not believing children, but children like

unto themſelves, as they be ſinful men and women: *Adam begat a child in his own likeneſs*; that is, a ſinful man like unto himſelf. Gen. 5. 3.

Now, we know that God's Image was defaced in *Adam*, he begat a Son, therefore corrupt, according to his own corrupt image, as *Job* ſpeaketh, *Job* 14. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean?* And this is the reaſon, *Gen.* 4. 3. That the corrupt nature of *Cain* led him to that, for the which he had no example. And this is true of all men elſe, though they might never ſee any thing that were evil, yet of themſelves, and of their own diſpoſitions they would do evil, being by nature, men haled thereunto.

Uſe 3. Parents duty.

Well, ſeeing Parents now by the fall of *Adam*, get ſinful children, and they be bred and born in ſin, and they be means to beget them, and to bring them into the World, and to conveigh Original ſin unto them, and make them in a fearfull and damnable eſtate: O how ſhould Parents labour to bring them out of the

the ſtate of nature and damnation, into grace and ſalvation? If thou ſhouldeſt do any thing to bring thy child into danger of death, how would it grieve thee, that thou by thy folly ſhouldeſt bring thy child to untimely Death! How much more to bring them in danger of eternal Death? And therefore, pity thy poor child, ſeek to make him the child of God; repent thy ſelf, pray for him, admoniſh him, bring him to hear the word, and publike means, call upon him to repent, to beg the pardon of his ſin, to fear God; give him good example, leaſt for want of this, thou doſt thruſt his poor ſoul into Hell: Oh how can Parents be too carefull for their children, ſeeing they have been the means to bring them into this wofull eſtate! *Note.*

Seeing that *David* doth acknowledge his natural ſin and corruption, to this end, even to aggravate the grievouſneſs of his ſin, and not to leſſen it, or excuſe himſelf, but rather to confeſs, that he was nothing elſe but a maſs of ſin, and all pollution: *Uſe 2.*

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This ſhews of what ſpirit thoſe prophane beaſts be, who, being told of their filthy ſins, of adultery, whoredome, and uncleanneſs, by and by they anſwer, Why, what ſhould we do? we are but fleſh and blood, and we ſee it is in our nature to ſin, and ſo think by one ſin to excuſe another, and by one debt to pay another. Tell men of their unbridled and unruly affection, covetouſneſs, anger, &c. and what is their anſwer? It is their nature to do ſo; which is all one, as to go about to pay one debt with another: And thus they go about to hide their ſins. We ſee, *David* ſought no ſuch ſtarting holes, but rather confeſſeth he is a maſs of ſin, and that he is every way worthy to periſh for his ſin, and in danger to be damned: And therefore, let us take heed that we do not ſo confeſs our natural corruption, as to make it a boulſter to uphold us in our ſins; but rather to be humbled for it, that our nature is ſo miſerably polluted, and labour to have it reformed.

Uſe 3. And laſt of all, this may ſerve to reprove the extreme folly of thoſe that

that stand so much upon their pedigree, as though they were not made of common mould, but even from the consideration of the greatness of their Parentage bear themselves aloof, thinking none their equal; as though true Nobility stood in this, that man descends of man.

Use 4. But let not such stand so much upon the honour and greatness of their birth, or the antiquity of their Predecessors, as though in these things alone they were happy. But let them labour withall, to be the Sons of God by regeneration: This is indeed the ornament of blood, and the finest flower in their Garland. And though a man be never so noble, or great in Estate, yet if he be not a repentant sinner, and such a one that is truly humbled before God, he is most base and vile, and his Nobility stinks in the Nostrils of God.

VERSE

VERSE VI.

Behold thou loveſt truth in the inward affections, therefore haſt thou taught me wiſdom in the ſecret of my heart.

David in the former Verſe had ſet out the grievouſneſs of his ſin, and by this, that he was even conceived in ſin, and even from the cradle was worthy to periſh, and to be damned. In this ſixth Verſe the Prophet *David* proceeds to ſet out the grievouſneſs of his ſin by another argument, taken from the moſt pure nature of Almighty God, who being moſt juſt and holy, and moſt pure, can delight in nothing but in that which is pure and holy: But he confeſſeth, that by his ſins he had defiled himſelf both in ſoul and body, ſo as he was not worthy to appear in the preſence of Almighty God.

Behold.

The meaning of the words.

AS if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord my God, thou art a moſt holy and moſt juſt God, and canſt abide

bide no unclean thing. But I, even *David*, once a creature after thine own heart, ſanctified by thy holy Spirit, have ſpoiled all, and with filthy uncleanneſs and adultery, as alſo murder, and ſhedding of guiltleſs blood, have defiled and ſtained my ſelf both in body and ſoul; ſo as I am now clean out of order, and ſo foul, that I am not worthy to come into thy preſence; ſo as inſtead of that inward purity and ſincerity, and that uprightneſs both in ſoul and body, I have brought out moſt ugly and curſed fruits of ſin and uncleanneſs. Thus doth he ſtill lay open his miſery, and aggravate his ſin before the Lord.

Seeing that *David* doth aggravate his ſin by weighing the moſt pure and holy nature of God, that can abide no impurity, or uncleanneſs. From hence we learn, that a man or woman ſhall never ſufficiently enough ſee themſelves, and their own miſery, till ſuch time as they do look up unto the moſt holy and pure nature of God. All the while we meaſure our ſelves by our ſelves, look upon

Doct. 1. True knowledge of God worketh true humility.

on our own goodneſs, wiſdome, knowledge, uprightneſs, we think highly of our ſelves; but if we once lift up our eyes to the moſt holy and moſt pure nature of God, and withall conſider how we are ſwarved from it, and are defiled with ſin: O then we begin to pull down our peacocks feathers, and to humble our ſelves in the ſight of God. *Job* had a long time ſtood upon his own goodneſs and virtues, but after the Lord opened his eyes, to ſee the moſt pure and holy Nature of God, and his own vileneſs, he cried out, *O Lord, thou I know, canſt do all things; no thought is hid from thee: I have ſpoken things I know not. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye ſeeth thee: Therefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.* *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, *Before the Commandements came, I was alive, Rom.* 7. A jolly fellow; thought well of himſelf, but when the Commandement came, and he had got the knowledge of God namely, that he was a holy and juſt God, then he was dead. The people

Job 42. 1, 2.

of

of *Israel* thought it an easie matter to serve the Lord, and were very forward, but *Joshua* adviseth them to take heed, for saith he, *The Lord is a holy God, a jealous God, and will not pardon your sins and iniquities.* So that by all these it appeareth, that the knowledge of God, as he is a holy, pure, and righteous God, is a special means to humble us, and to make us know our selves, nd our misery; and therefore doth the Prophet *David* prefix before it this note of attention, *Behold*, mark, consider it well. Jo. 13. 10

What is the reason, that sinfull and miserable men, dare be so bold to stand upon their own goodness and worthiness, when they come into God's presence, like the proud Pharisee? because they do not consider with whom they have to deal, with God who is most pure, and loveth purity, and can abide no impurity. Oh if men would look up into the holy and most pure nature of God, it would be a special means to humble them, and to pluck down their pride: Then they would see and acknowledge that *Use* 1. Luk. 18. 24.

that they are but duſt and aſhes, as *Abraham*, pleading with God, confeſſeth, and humbles himſelf: Then they would come with more reverence and fear, and confeſs themſelves vile and miſerable creatures. O then let us think upon this with *David*, *Job*, *Abraham*, when we come into God's preſence to humble us, that we may come with great preparation, and look unto our feet and affections, that we may remember we come not into the preſence of an earthly King, but of the ever-living God, as that we thereby be brought not to conceive too well of our ſelves, as many men do in theſe days.

Gen. 17.

Thou loveſt truth in the inward affection.

HEnce mark, that a ſound, upright, and ſincere heart, is that the Lord loveth well, and taketh delight in, and without this, all that we do is loathſome, and abominable. This honeſt and good heart our Saviour Chriſt commendeth in *Nathaniel*; *Behold, a true Iſraelite, in whom is no guile*: This true *Iſraelite*, this upright heart,

Jo. 1.45.

heart, the Lord loveth it, and the Lord delighteth in it; *And the good ground are those which with an honest and good heart, hear the Word, and bring forth fruit with patience.* Luk. 8. 15.

This serveth to cut the comb of all hypocrites and dissemblers, who think God will be pleased with outward shews and colours, although they be rotten at the Core like Apples of *Sodom*: The Lord sheweth his dislike of these naughty and dissembling wretches; *This people come near me with their lips, and honour me with their mouths, but their hearts are far from me.* So the Lord telleth the Jews. *You did but dissemble with him in your hearts, when you sent me unto the Lord to pray for you, and that you would do his Will, and his Word, but now you will do nothing but clean contrary, even after your own lusts.* And amongst us in these days, there are many hypocrites and dissemblers, painted tombs, gay without, making fair shews, and goodly colours, but their hearts are rotten to the Core; they are but counterfeit Christians, and God abhorreth *Use* 1. Jer. 52. 20.

horreth them, and hath no liking of them: For as he loved truth and soundness of heart, so he hateth and abhorreth all hypocrisie. Let all such look upon the fearfull hand of the Act. 5. Lord on *Ananias*, and *Sapphira*, who, because they would seem to be religious, and somewhat forward to sell their Lands, and give to the poor; because their hearts were not sound, and upright, but they dissembled; therefore the Lord smote them both dead. And to shew how the Lord hateth all hypocrites, and dissemblers, Christ, in the 24 of *Matthew*, and v. 51. saith, *All vile sinners shall have their portion with Hypocrites*, because of all men, hypocrites shall have greatest measure of torment and condemnation.

Use 2. Seeing that the Lord loveth and delighteth in truth, and sincerity of the mind, and affection, let us be carefull all our days to get a sound and upright heart, void of all hypocrisie and dissimulation, so as in all things we find our hearts sound and sincere, in all our duties in the worship of God.

God, in ſpeaking, hearing, praying; yea, in all things. Now this uprightneſs and ſoundneſs of the heart will appear, as by many other things, ſo by this, when a man is carefull to pleaſe God, and to ſhun ſin in private as in publick, in ſecret as abroad, and making conſcience of ſin, although no man nor Angel could accuſe him of it; then it is a ſign his heart is ſound and upright. But if thou find, that in ſecret thou dareſt commit thoſe ſins, which thou wouldeſt be loath to commit abroad in the ſight and view of others; it is a ſign, thy heart is not upright with God. Oh then, let us labour to get this honeſt and good heart, this ſoundneſs and ſincerity of our affections; that is, *Truth in the inward affections*, which will bring peace unto our ſouls, and make all we do acceptable, when our heart is purified by faith. When the Lord deſcribes a bleſſed man, he ſhews who it is, *Even in whoſe ſpirit there is no guile*. And whatſoever a man doth, though never ſo excellent and glorious in the eyes of men, though

Act. 15. 9.

Pſal. 32.

though a man could even ſpeak with the tongue of men and Angels, and could pray never ſo excellently for words or matter; yet if the heart be not ſound, but hollow, and full of Hypocriſie, all is not worth a button; whereas, if the heart be ſincere and ſound, purified by faith in Chriſt Jeſus, though men have many wants and weakneſſes, the Lord God regardeth the uprightneſs and truth of the heart.

Doct. 2. A ſanctified heart a great bleſſing of God.

Laſt of all, obſerve hence what a ſingular favour and grace of God it is when we have ſound and ſanctified hearts, ſincere and upright with God, void of hypocriſie and diſſimulation. It is that the Lord ſo highly eſteems of, that he wiſheth moſt earneſtly for it, *Deut.* 5. 2, 9. *Oh that there were this heart in them.* And the Prophet *David* ſaith here, that the Lord doth love truth in *the inward affection*; and again, *Prov* 11. 28. *They that be of a froward heart, are abominable to the Lord; but they that be upright in heart are his delight.* This upright heart is in none but thoſe that be tru-

truly regenerate, which have truly repented of their faults, and believe in Christ Jesus, *Act.* 15. 9. Because faith alone doth purifie the heart; and therefore, those that do not believe and repent, cannot have this pure heart; and it is such an heart as hath no purpose to live in any known sin whatsoever, but a desire and carefull endeavour to perform obedience to every one of the Commandements.

Well, seeing the Lord God doth so highly commend an honest heart, and so earnestly desireth and wisheth it: Oh how should we labour for it, to have a sound heart purified by faith in Christ Jesus, to carry no purpose to sin in any thing, but in all things to please him, and to do his will; and therefore again, I say, let us look to our hearts that they be sound, and that, as we profess our selves to be Christians in shew, so we may prove our selves Christians in the sight of God: That he may approve of us in that we have sound hearts to walk with our God, and a purpose in all things to do his will.

Joh.

Joh. 1. 14. It is no small commendation that Christ gives to *Nathanael*, that he was a true *Israelite*, in whom was no guile. And nothing indeed doth more distinguish a true Christian from a counterfeit, but this truth and sincerity of heart. *Esau*, *Gen.* 27. can mourn like *Ezechias*; and *Ahab* can put on sackcloath, 1 *Reg.* 21. and *Saul* as well as *David* can say, *I have sinned.* But their hearts were full of hypocrisie, far from sincerity before God.

Doct. 3. Sin is but a lying vanity.

Seeing God loveth truth in the inward affection, we learn, Where truth doth not reign, sin do reign, which is but a lying vanity: And all those that have been in love with it, in the end have found the same to be true.

Jos. 7. 25. *Achan*, through his covetous desire, thought to enrich himself by the wedge of Gold, and the *Babylonish* garment, which he had purloined, contrary to the Commandement of God; but it fell out to his own destruction.

1 Kin. 21. *Ahab* rose up, and took possession of *Naboth*'s Vineyard, but withall, he purchased the wrath of God, the destruction of himself, and the ruine

ruine of his whole houſe. The like may be ſaid of *Judas*, who, through his covetous deſires, was led to betray his Maſter; but how he digeſted the ſame in the end, the Evangeliſt declareth; when he ſaw that Chriſt was condemned, he brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver to the high Prieſt, and Elders, ſaying, *I have ſinned, in betraying the innocent blood.* And this ſhall men one day be ſure to find, that the periſhing pleaſures of ſin, ſhall have ſorrow in the end. That, if they have not truth in the inward affection of the heart, there muſt needs raign ſin; and ſin is a lying vanity, and will deceive in the end. Mat. 27. 4.

Indeed all ſin to a natural man is delightfull, and pleaſant, he findeth it ſweet to his taſte; but it is as ſweet meat that hath poyſon mingled with it: That howſoever it is ſweet in the taſte, yet in the end it bringeth death. So it is with ſin, it doth delight in the committing thereof, but in the end, threatneth the deſtruction of the whole man. Heb. 3. 3.

Here then we may ſee the wofull fruit *Uſe* 1.

fruit of sin; which natural men make their chiefest happiness and felicity. They may indeed delight for a time, and please the carnal desires of natural men: But oh, alas! they bring an heavy accompt and reckoning in the end. So that we may say to all natural and carnal men, whose portion is in this life, as *Abner* said in another case; *Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?* This we may see in *Cain*, *Esau*, in *Ahab*, *Judas*, &c. that having tasted of the bread of deceit, have had their *mouths filled with gravel in the end.* For the motions of sin are like those Locusts of the bottomless pit; having faces like men, and their hair like the hair of a Woman, but a tail like a Scorpion, which stingeth to death.

2 Sam. 2. 26.

Prov. 9.

Use 2. We learn hence, that it must be the Christian practice of a godly man: Namely, to walk plainly and sincerely, to be a true *Israelite* indeed, in whom there is no guile. This is that which *Solomon* teacheth: *He that walketh uprightly, walketh boldly; but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.* On it

Prov. 10. 9.

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is a gracious thing for a man in all things to labour to keep faith and a good conscience; such a man may assure himself, that the Lord loveth him: *For he loveth truth in the inward affections:* But such as commit wickedness without care or conscience, shall be sure to feel the smart in the end.

Therefore hast thou taught me wisdome in the secret of my heart.

THe Prophet *David* in this last place aggravateth his sin by that knowledge which God in mercy had bestowed upon him: Namely, that God had taught him heavenly wisdome by the Law of God, whereby he knew very well what God required at his hands, and how he ought to serve and worship God; Nay, by his Spirit he had taught him wisdome in the secret of his heart in a special manner, revealing his will unto him; and therefore he confesseth, that his sin was the more hainous and grievous: For if he had never been sanctified, nor truly called; if he had been ignorant and blind in the word of God, though it could not excuse him, yet his sin had

David's sin heinous, and why?

Because God had taught him wisdome secretly.

had not been so great: But seeing he, who had made so good proceeding in the service and worshiip of God, who had taught others, who was so enlightned by the Spirit, and been taught in a special manner, against knowledge, against conscience, and so fouly sinned against God; this highly increaseth and aggravateth his sin.

Doct. 4. A fearfull thing to sin against knowledge.

Hence then learn, that it is a fearfull and very dangerous sin for any man or woman to sin against the known truth of the Word and Law of God, against knowledge and conscience, when as we have not onely known the will and word of God, but believed it, been enlightned by the Spirit, and being taught of God in our inward affections, then against all these means to sin, and to commit iniquity against knowledge and conscience, it is a most dangerous thing; this may here appear in *David*, who was grievously wounded for his sin above all other, and felt the smart of it to humble him all the days of his life. So *Peter's* denial of Christ, *Luk*, ch. 23. though it were for fear,

Lu. 23.1.

yet

yet being against knowledge and conscience, oh, it caused him to weep bitterly. And indeed, sins of knowledge, and against conscience, are done with some presumption against God. And therefore, if ever a man be touched for them, they will wound him deep, and cause tears to follow.

Seeing it is so fearfull and dangerous to sin against knowledge and conscience, because thereby we do what lyeth in us to quench the spirit, to wound our consciences, and it is a great step unto the sin against the Holy Ghost: Oh then let us in the fear of God, take heed we never give that liberty to our own lusts and liking, as to sin against knowledge and conscience. If the Devil tempts thee to any sin, which thou knowest is condemned in the word of God, as swearing, lying, stealing, murther, adultery, &c. and thy conscience telleth thee of it, and checks thee for it, do not commit it, though thou mightest gain a Kingdome by it: For that which followeth will be a far greater loss; for thou shalt lose *Use 1.*

peace of Conſcience, and joy in the Spirit, feeling of God's love and comfort in affliction; and if God be not mercifull unto thee, thou ſhalt go on from ſin to ſin, to a reprobate ſenſe. It is true, Ignorance ſhall excuſe no man; yet ſins of ignorance are far leſs than ſins of knowledge, and againſt conſcience: *Paul* perſecuted the Church of God, but it was by ignorance, and therefore God ſhewed him mercy; but if thou of ſpite and malice ſhalt perſecute, and againſt knowledge and the checks of thy conſcience, hurt and injure the ſervants of God, and members of Chriſt, how canſt thou ever look to find mercy? Thou knoweſt that God forbiddeth, and condemneth lying, ſwearing, ſtealing, murther, adultery, drunkenneſs, &c. And if thou ſhalt wittingly and willingly ruſh into them, though thou know they be forbidden, thou maiſt look for ſome fearfull judgements of God upon thee: And therefore, if thou be tempted, anſwer, I will not yield; It is written I may not ſteal, lye, commi

mit adultery, &c. as Christ answered the Devil. Mat 4.

We see, that if God leave his children, they may fall dangerously into great errors, yea, against Knowledge, and Conscience, as *Abraham*, *Paul*, *Peter*, &c. For of our selves we have no power to resist the subtle temptations and assaults of the Devil; but even, as a staff stands so long as it is staid, but when it is left alone, presently it falls with the least puff of wind; so do we; and therefore let us not rely too much upon our own power, as *Peter* did, and fell; but fear our weakness, and suspect our selves, and pray the Lord to hold us to our selves, for then there is no sin so foul into which we will not easily plunge our selves. *Use* 2.

And yet, if the Lord leave us to fall into some great sin against Knowledge, and Conscience, let us not despair, or think we have sinned against the Holy Ghost, as it is the Devil's usual temptation, to perswade a Christian, that he hath sinned against knowledge and conscience, and there-

fore, against the Holy Ghost, and that God hath no mercy for him, and to that purpose he abuseth one special place. *Heb.* 6.4,5,6. *For it is impossible, that they which were once lightned, and have tasted of the heavenly gifts, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good Word of God, and of the power of the world to come, if they fall away, should be renewed again by repentance.* By this place, and such like, the subtil Devil labours to bring the children of God to despair, if they commit sin, after they be called and enlightned, because they sin against knowledge and conscience.

But that the children of God may offend, and commit some great crime and evil against knowledge and conscience, after they be enlightned, and effectually called and sanctified, as appeareth in *Abraham*, *Sarah*, *Paul*, *Peter*, *&c.* and daily experience proveth it, and therefore all sins of knowledge, and against conscience, are not sins against the Holy Ghost; but in that place he speaketh of such, as of desperate malice, and set purpose,

offend

offend against the Holy Ghost, and wholly fall away, and abandon all Religion, and renounce Christ, and his Gospel: And therefore the Holy Ghost saith, not onely if they fall, but if they fall away, that is, even cut themselves clean off from Christ. Again, that they sin wilfully, even desperately persecuting Christ in his members, and crucifie the Lord of glory, and make a mock of him, trample under foot the Son of God, and account the blood of the New Testament as an unholy thing, and despise the Spirit of God: Now none of all these did befall *David*, *Peter*, or any elect child of God; who, though they sin of knowledge against conscience, yet do they mourn, and are grieved for it; and it is for fear, or by the continual instigation of the Devil, and strength of his temptation, or in hatte, or of weakness; but afterwards they do grieve for it, and do desire nothing more than to repent, and to be reconciled to God; which they cannot do, that commit sin against the Holy Ghost.

Doct. 5. Heavenly wisdom is the proper gift of God's Spirit.

We learn, that heavenly wisdome, and saving knowledge, which worketh in the heart, and converteth the soul, is the proper work and gift of God alone by his Spirit: Thou (O Lord) hast by thy Spirit taught me wisdom in the secret of my heart, enlightning and giving me a heart to know thee: *All the Elect shall be taught of God.* Again, the Lord promiseth, *To make all her children Schollers of God*; and he will be their Master and Teacher: So that it is manifest, that God alone is the School-master, who doth teach by his Spirit true and heavenly wisdome, saving and sound knowledge in the heart.

Job. 6. 45.

Isa. 45. 13.

God teacheth his wisdome two ways.

And this teaching of God, contains two parts: First, the enlightning of the mind; Secondly, the bowing of the heart.

Rev. 3. 9.

First, the Lord doth by his Spirit, which is the Eye-salve, anoint our eyes, and clear our minds, and maketh us able to understand his will in his Word: By Nature (alas) we cannot know his Will; *For the natural man perceives not the things that be of God*;

1 Cor. 2. 10.

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for they be fooliſhneſs unto him; and even as the clear Sun is unto a blind man, ſo is the Word to us; by nature we underſtand nothing to our good.

Secondly, the Lord teacheth wiſdome in the ſecret of the heart, when he bows the heart to the obedience of his will; ſo the Lord opened the heart of *Lydia*, to attend unto the Preaching of *Paul*. Act. 16.

Seeing it is God who teacheth wiſdome, and ſaving knowledge, we muſt labour to become his Souldiers and Diſciples; we muſt be willing to learn of this Maſter, to come to his School where his Word is taught, and intreat him that he will teach us his will, and teach us wiſdome in our hearts; *David*, *Pſal.* 119 in many verſes hath it, *Teach me thy word, O Lord, and I will keep it even to the end.* And as for ſuch as ſcorn to have God for their School-maſter, to come to his School to be taught of God, all their wiſdom, if it were as great as the wiſdom of *Solomon* and *Athitophel*, it is but folly with God. *Uſe* 1.

Seeing God, that is our ſpiritual

M 5 School-

ſchool-maſter, teacheth not onely the Ear, or Tongue, but he teacheth the Heart, in the ſecret of the heart and affection, by moving and bowing them to obedience: This ſheweth, that moſt men are not taught of God; for all the knowledge that they have of God, and his Word, it is onely in words, lip-knowledge, and the knowledge in the tongue; to talk of God, to diſcourſe and commend Religion, but it never cometh to the heart and conſcience to humble them, or to enlighten the mind, truly to convert the ſoul, or to bow the will and affection to obedience. Well, know this, that all thy knowledge and wiſdome cannot do thee any good, unleſs it bring forth obedience to the will of God; and therefore try and prove thy knowledge, whether it hath humbled thy heart, moved thy affection to obey the will of God, to keep his Commandements: For if thy heart give way to ſin, and thou art not purged, nor bettered, nor reformed in heart and life, (alas) thy knowledge is but carnal, and will never

never ſave thy poor ſoul.

And this ſerves to ſtop the mouths of many vain hypocrites and diſſemblers, who, becauſe they can talk and diſcourſe of matters of Religion, and commend the Preacher, do think themſelves jolly fellows, and good Chriſtians. But I ſay, unleſs the Spirit of God teach thee wiſdome in the ſecret of thy heart, by bowing it to Obedience and Reformation, all thy knowledge is but a carnal and fleſhly knowledge, which may befall a Reprobate. *Paul* ſhews us how we may undoubtedly know, whether we be taught of God, or not; *If any man love God, he is taught of God.* So that, by our unfeigned love of God, which will appear in keeping his Commandement, and doing his will, we ſhall know whether we be truly taught of God: And he that hath not the love of God, nor care to keep his Commandements, that man, let his knowledge be never ſo great, certainly he was never yet truly taught of God. 1 Cor. 8.

VERSE

VERSE VII.

7. *Purge me with Hyſop, and I ſhall be clean: Waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than Snow.*

David renews his former requeſts; verſ. 2.

DAvid having made his requeſt unto God for mercy, for the pardon of his ſins, and uſed a reaſon from the free confeſſion and acknowledgement of them, to move the Lord to pity him; doth here again renew his ſuit, and humble requeſt unto God; and he prayeth here unto God for two great benefits: Firſt, Juſtification in the free pardon of his ſins, and imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, *verſ.* 7. And ſecondly, for Sanctification, and Reformation of the whole man, *verſ.* 10.

And firſt, *verſ.* 7. he intreats the Lord for the free pardon of his ſins, that God would cleanſe and waſh him from them in the blood of Chriſt, the Lamb of God: And ſecondly, he prayeth for the bleſſed fruit of Juſtification; namely, peace of

of conſcience, and joy in the Spirit, *verſ.* 8. For till the conſcience have a certificate from God, and a bleſſed pardon ſealed and applied by faith, it cannot be at quier.

Doct. 1. Pardon of ſin the greateſt mercy.

Firſt, ſeeing *David* had prayed before unto God for mercy and pardon of his ſins, and here doth again renew the ſame Petition, and in other words put up his requeſt unto God for the ſame: Hence we learn, that the pardon of our ſins is a ſingular favour and mercy of God beſtowed upon us for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake; which appears in that, *David* ſo often in this Pſalm prays for it; therefore it is a great and ineſtimable mercy, and hardly come by: Not ſo eaſily as moſt men think. *David* ſhewed how great a bleſſing it is, in that he preferred it before a Kingdome; and though he was a King, yet he pronounceth him bleſſed, not that was a King, in the 32 Pſalm, v. 1, 2. *But whoſe ſin is pardoned. God hath ſent his Son Jeſus Chriſt to bleſs you, in turning every one of you from your evil ways*; a bleſſing of all bleſſings.

Seeing

Use 1. Seeing remiſſion of ſins is ſo great a bleſſing, and hardly come by: Firſt, we learn, that we eſteem of this above all other things in the world. If the queſtion were asked, what we deſire in the whole world? we ſhould anſwer with feeling, the pardon of our ſins; and therefore we ſhould deſire and ſeek this bleſſing above all other. If thou be as poor as *Job*, and haſt this, thou art rich, and a happy man.

Mar. 16. 16.

Seeing *David* uſed ſo many prayers unto God, and uſeth ſuch reaſons to move the Lord to pity him, and to pardon his offences: Hence we ſee, that thoſe are much deceived, who think it the eaſieſt matter in the world, to get the pardon of their ſins; and if they can but ſay, *Lord have mercy on me*, all is well: No, no, Lord have mercy upon me will not ſerve the turn; good things are hardly come by without great travel, labour, and ſtudy: How much more is it hard to get the pardon of our ſins, the ſalvation of our ſouls, and life eternal? And therefore let us obſerve,

ſerve, that to get the pardon of our ſins, we muſt take great pains, labour, and diligence; we muſt ſhed many a tear in bewailing them: They will coſt many a ſob, and many a ſigh, many a prayer and requeſt unto *God* upon our knees; and then, if we obtain it, Oh it is a wonderfull favour and mercy of God, it will make us truly happy, and bleſſed for evermore.

Parts of the verſe.

In this Verſe here are two Perſons meant: The firſt is the Phyſitian, which is God, being intreated by the Patient, *David, to purge him with Hyſop*; then the confeſſion of the patient, *I ſhall be whiter than Snow*; which ſhews a two-fold fruit and effect of his Requeſts. *David* here puts all the work into God's hands: He doth not ſay, he will help to make the medicine, but leaves it onely to God; nor doth *David* ſay to God, make thou the Salve, and I will bring *Hyſop*; but his Requeſt and Petition was, *Do thou purge me, do thou waſh me, then ſhall I be clean and whiter than Snow*; which is the confeſſion of the party.

For the firſt Petition, *Purge me with Hyſop*

Hyſop. In theſe words he alludeth to the legal ceremonies and manner of purging, uſed in the time of the old Law: In the purifying of the Leper, and of any perſon polluted, they were to dip the bunch of *Hyſop* in blood, or in water, and ſo ſprinkle it on the perſon to be purified; which ceremony was a Type and Figure of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, who is that alone ſacrifice and lamb of God, which taketh away the ſins of the world.

Deut. 14. 6, 7. Num. 10. 18.

Now then, ſeeing that by this ſprinkling with *Hyſop* in the blood of beaſts, is meant the ſprinkling with the blood of Jeſus Chriſt; when he ſaith, *O Lord, purge me with Hyſop, &c.* It is all one as if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord, I am exceedingly polluted and ſtained with ſin and uncleanneſs, and no Leper was ever more vile and loathſome than I am now in thy ſight, neither is there any water to waſh and purge me; but I beſeech thee of thy mercy, to waſh me, and to ſprinkle my ſoul with the blood of that immaculate Lamb *Chriſt Jeſus*, that can alone take away my ſins, and

and so I shall be made clean and pure again.

Hence mark, a miserable and cursed fruit of sin: No Leprosie did ever so defile the body of man in the time of the Jews, as sin doth stain and defile both body and soul; no Dung-hill nor stinking Carrion is so loathsome in the eyes of man, as an unclean sinner in the sight of God, till he be washed and purged in the blood of Christ. *Doct.* 2. Sin is a Leprosie.

This is the reason which the Lord used, *Joshua* 7. 12. Why *Israel* fell before their enemies, and he went not forth with their Armies, when they fell before the men of *Ai*. *Therefore the children of* Israel *cannot stand before their enemies, but have turned their backs upon their enemies, because they are execrable.* We see then the nature of sin, how it maketh a man abominable and detestable in the sight of God.

Seeing this is the nature and fruit of sin, that it defileth and staineth both body and soul, and maketh them far more loathsome and vile than any Toad or Serpent; how should we *Use* 1.

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abhor sin, and every wicked way? We will be very loath to eat Poyson, or Rats-bane, or any thing else wherein is danger: Oh, sin is a kind of Rats-bane, which infects and poysons both body and soul, and therefore let us shun sin, and touch it not.

Use 2. When as we be defiled with sin, and so made filthy and unclean in the sight of God, and more vile than a Leaper, or Dung-hill, or Carrion, Toad, or Serpent: Oh let us pray with *David*, to be washed and purged from our filthiness; let us repent of all our sins, bewail our uncleanness: Let us by faith, as with a bunch of *Hyssop*, besprinkle our souls with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Doct. Seeing *David* desired to be *purged with Hyssop*: We learn hence, that the Lord would not that man should despise such Ceremonies and Types of Christ, as he himself commanded in the time of the Law; and though it may seem a vain and needless thing to besprinkle them with a bunch of *Hyssop*, dipped in the blood of a beast; yet, seeing it was the Commande-

The Ceremonies under the Law were but to lead us unto Jesus Christ.

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ment of God, they did not despise the Ceremony, being a Type of the blood of Christ: When they could not behold with bodily eyes, the blood of Christ, it pleased God by such Ceremonies, and Types, to help their Faith, by sprinkling the blood of a beast, to shew unto them that they must be sprinkled in their souls with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Hence we learn, by the example of *David*, and all the holy Fathers and Servants of God, in the time of the Law, to use all such Sacraments and Ceremonies as God commands in his Word for the helping of our faith; we cannot see the blood of Christ, nor touch it with our outward senses, yet the Lord hath appointed the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord, that in them we might see, feel, touch and taste, as it were the body and blood of Jesus Christ: And therefore all those which despise these Sacraments, making little or no accompt of them, shew that they despise the Ordinance of God, and so make light of that which is ordained

Use. Obedience required to God's Ordinances.

ed for the good of their ſouls.

Doct. 4. Chriſt's blood alone doth purge our ſins. Heb. 9.9. 1 Joh. 1.7. Rev. 1.5. Joh. 1.9. 1 Pet. 1.2.

Mark further, when that *David* prayeth the Lord to purge him with *Hyſop*, the word ſignifies to purge by Sacrifice, even the Sacrifice of the Son of God, and by his Death and Blood-ſhedding to purge his ſins away: So as he confeſſeth, there is nothing in Heaven, or Earth, that is of force to purge him from his offences, and uncleanneſs, but the blood of Chriſt alone. It is not the blood of Bullocks, Lambs, and Goats, that can waſh away the leaſt ſpot of ſin, but even the blood of that immaculate Lamb, Chriſt Jeſus, and to him all the Sacrifices had relation, and ſhadowed our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt the true Paſchal Lamb unto us.

The uſe of the ceremonies under the Law.

And this was the reaſon why *David* maketh mention of *Hyſop*, that God would *purge him with Hyſop*, becauſe God, in the time of the Law, ordained this Ceremony for a confirmation of their faith, and to help the people of the *Jews* to the better ſight and knowledge of the promiſed Meſſiah; for ſeeing our Saviour was not yet come

come into the world, and they could not ſee the work of redemption as yet performed, the Lord would lead them by theſe Ceremonies unto Jeſus Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, that they might ſee him, as it were before their eyes: For when they ſaw a Beaſt ſlain, and the blood ſpilt, they then took a bunch of *Hyſop* dipt in the blood of the Beaſt, and beſprinkled them that offered the ſame with the blood. They were thereby taught even ſo much, that Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, and promiſed Meſſiah, ſhould be ſlain, and put to death, his blood ſhed for their ſins, and they muſt by faith, as a bunch of *Hyſop*, beſprinkle their ſouls with the blood of our Saviour for the pardon of their ſins. *Note.*

It is true indeed, that the Lord hath eaſed us in the time of the Goſpel, of all thoſe old and ancient Ceremonies; neither is it the will of God, that we ſhould be clogged with the ſenſeleſs, needleſs, and beggerly rudiments, being the Ceremonies and Traditions of men, which become not the ſimplicity of the Goſpel. But yet hath in mercy Gal. 4. 6.

mercy appointed certain helps and means to lead us unto Christ Jesus; as the two Sacraments to help our faith: For we being as yet carnal, (alas) we cannot behold no more than we see. And therefore the Lord hath appointed them as helps to lead us to this Saviour, to set him before our eyes in the water in Baptism, and bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, that so our faith should be confirmed thereby, and we might even see Christ Jesus before our eyes. And therefore, as *David* did carefully use such helps and ceremonies as God commanded, for the strengthning of their faith; so let us be carefull to use the helps that God hath left under the Gospel, for the strengthning of our weak faith.

Purge me with Hyssop.

The meaning of the words.

THe meaning is this, accept of that most perfect and everlasting Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for the punishment due to my sin: As if he should have said, O Lord, I confess I have sinned exceedingly, I have been born in sin, and have by Murder and Adul-

Adultery deserved to be condemned eternally, and to have the curse and punishment due to my sin, to be cast upon me; but I beseech thee in mercy to accept of the blood-shedding of thy Son, and my Saviour Jesus Christ, for the satisfaction due to my sins. *David*, he watered his cheeks by day, and his couch by night: And indeed tears of true penitents, are the wine of the Angels, and those that have a sorrowfull heart, have the Sword of *David*, and the bow of *Jonathan*, for there is no Rhetorick in God's sight, to that of tears and sighs; for tears have a voice, as it may appear by *David's* words, *Thou hast heard the voice of my weeping:* And by our unfeigned tears we offer violence to heaven, and tye the ears of God to the tongues of men.

And whereas the justification of a sinner in the sight of God, stands on two parts: First, remission and pardon of sin; Secondly, the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Methinks the Prophet requires and begges both these at the hands of God: First,

First, to be purged, or as the word signifies, to purge, (not by washing) but by sacrificing, to appease the wrath and anger of God, by the blood of Christ. Secondly, when he prayeth to be washed, he desireth to be made pure, and righteous, not in his own righteousnes, but onely in the righteousnes of Jesus Christ, imputed to him, and laid hold upon by faith.

Doct. 5. Salvation is to be sought for onely in Christ.

Seeing *David* entreats the Lord that he would *Purge him*; that is, accept of the most perfect Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for the punishment due to his sins: We learn, that there is no name given under Heaven, whereby a man shall be saved, but onely in the name of Jesus Christ; it is not the blood of Bullocks, Lambs, and Goats, that can wash away the least spot of sin, but onely the blood of that immaculate Lamb Christ Jesus. It is Christ himself that must purge us, who is our high Priest; for we cannot pacifie and purifie our sins by Hyssop, or by the blood of a young Heifer, or by oblations and

1 Joh. 1. 7
1 Pet. 1. 18
Rev. 1. 5.

Christ, to embrace him by Faith, that so God the Father may for his sake pardon our sins, accept of his death and passion for the punishment of them all.

And that we may be purged from our sins, both the fault and the punishment, by the Blood and Sacrifice of Christ, we must first repent of them with *David*, be grieved for them, bewail them, amend our lives, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus; we must beg for pardon of them at the hands of God; we must do with our sins, as *Phineas* did with *Zimri* and *Cozbi*, pierce them even through and through.

Secondly, besides we must be-sprinkled with *Hyssop*, that is, as in the time of the Law, they dipped the *Hyssop* in the blood of the Beast, and so besprinkled the person to be cleansed; even so must we by Faith, as it were with a bunch of Hyssop, apply the blood of Christ, and by Faith besprinkle our defiled Consciences, it will cleanse us from all our sins, and satisfie the wrath of God for the punishment.

But if men either do not repent of them, and leave their ſins, or do not come with faith, to apply the blood of Chriſt, they cannot have pardon: As if there were a ſoveraign Plaiſter to cure any ſore, if a man do not apply it to the wound, but let it lye in a Box, it will do him no good; ſo uuleſs we apply the blood of Chriſt to our wounds and ſores by Faith, alas, it cannot help us: And as the woman with the bloody iſſue touched Chriſt's garment, and was healed; ſo if we can by faith touch the blood of our Saviour, and apply it to our ſelves, it will heal all the bleeding wounds of ſin.

The ſecond requeſt is, that God would waſh him, and make him pure, not imputing his offences unto him, but covering them in the Death and Obedience of his Son Jeſus Chriſt: And therefore in the ſecond part of this verſe, he prayeth for the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs; namely, that God would not onely remit the puniſhment due to his ſins, but look upon him as he is in Chriſt, covered

vered with his righteousnes, and that God would account him just for our Saviour's obedience, holiness, satisfaction and righteousnes. For when God beholds a poor sinner covered with righteousnes, holiness, and obedience, of his Son our Saviour, then he accounts him as no sinner, but just and righteous: Even as a man beholding any red thing through a red Glass, it appeareth red, or of the same colour; so if the Lord look on us in our Saviour, we seem righteous and holy before him. Psal. 32. 1, 2.

Whereas the Prophet *David* intreats the Lord to wash him, he shew that he was defiled with sin, and stained with uncleanness, and so stood in great need of God's mercy, to cleanse his filthy soul, and defiled conscience, now polluted with most vile adultery, and filthy uncleanness: That his soul was now besprinkled with the innocent blood of that faithfull Servant, and loyal Subject, *Urias* the Hittite. And as it was with *David*, sin infected him, made him vile and loathsome, filthy and abominable in *Doct.* 6 Sin defiles a man.

the sight of *God*: Even so it doth begrime the face of the best of God's children, it stains and pollutes them both in soul and body; yea, no carrion is more loathsome and odious, than a sinner defiled and polluted with sin, is in the sight of God.

The Leprosie was a loathsome disease, it infected the body, and the very garments; yea, the stones and timber: But this spiritual Leprosie, sin, infects the whole man, body and soul; yea, it infecteth heaven and earth, and all other creatures in the world; and here is nothing that can take away the spots and blemishes of sin, but only the precious blood of JESUS CHRIST, laid hold on by true faith.

Use 1. Well, seeing all of us are thus defiled with sin, as *David* was, in soul and body, let us desire to be washed, let us bewail them, loath and hate them, intreat the Lord that he would not impute our sins unto us, but cover them under the Robe of Christ's righteousness; and that we should abhor every sin for this cause, because it defiles us, it pollutes us, and makes us unworthy

worthy to appear in God's presence.

Seeing *David*, though an holy Prophet of God, a man after God's own heart, yet desires the Lord to wash him from his sins, and to cover them in the obedience of Christ Jesus, applied by faith: We see that no man is able to stand before the face of God in his own righteousness, in his own works, or worthiness; for if any might, who might better have done it then *David*, a man truly sanctified, a holy Prophet, a man after God's own heart? Yea, the Prophet *Esay* saith, that all our Righteousness is no better than a stained clout, full of blood, and all pollution: And as St. *Paul* desires that he may not be found in his own righteousness, and worthiness, at the day of Judgement, but in the righteousness of Christ, laid hold on by faith. And therefore, let us renounce all our own goodness, and worthiness, and account all but as dung in respect of Christ and his Righteousness. And as for the Church of *Rome*, we may see their intolerable pride, that they

Use 2.

Isa. 64.6.

Phil. 3.9
1 Cor. 1
30.

do ſo much reſt and rely upon their own goodneſs, and worthineſs, merits, and righteouſneſs, to ſtand upon it, and appear in it for remiſſion of ſins, and life eternal. But (alas) if *Paul*, *David*, and all the Saints of God abhor themſelves in duſt and aſhes, deſire to be purged and waſhed, and covered in the Obedience and Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt; yea, count all their own Righteouſneſs but as dung, and dare not appear in it before the ſeat of God's judgements, but in the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: Shall any Papiſts of them dare to ſtand before God in judgement, in his own Righteouſneſs and Worthineſs? No, no; he ſhall tremble and quail, and not abide ſo great and glorious a preſence.

I ſhall be clean, I ſhall be whiter than Snow.

IN theſe words the Prophet ſhews the event and iſſue of this, when a man doth truly repent, is reconciled to God in Jeſus Chriſt, and is waſhed and purged from his ſins by faith in Chriſt's blood; then he is made of a moſt

moſt vile and loathſome ſinner, a moſt bleſſed and moſt holy child of God; of a filthy unclean limb of the Devil, a bleſſed member of Jeſus Chriſt, beautifull and glorious in the eyes of *God*, being covered in Chriſt's Righteouſneſs.

Seeing *David* ſaith, when *God* ſhall pardon him his ſins on his true Repentance, and be reconciled unto him, covering his ſin in the merits and obedience in Chriſt, *Then he ſhall be clean:* Then before a man repent, be reconciled to God by Jeſus Chriſt, and be purged from his ſins, he is moſt unclean, and filthy, vile, loathſom, and abominable in the ſight of *God*: and indeed ſo he is, no Carrion worſe, no Toad ſo ugly, nor Serpent ſo full of poyſon, as a filthy ſinner polluted with ſin, till he repent, get the pardon of them, and be reconciled to God by Chriſt; I pray you take knowledge of this Doctrine, whatſoever thou art, high, low, rich, poor, young, old, Prince, or Noble, till thou repent, till thou turn to God, till thou get the pardon of thy ſins,

Doct. 7. The woefull eſtate of all natural men.

and be washed by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, thou art most vile and miserable, thou art most unclean and filthy, thou art more ugly than the venomous Toad, more loathsome than the Serpent, more filthy and stinking than the Carrion; yea, no creature is so loathsome before God as a filthy sinner, that lives in sin without Repentance, that is not washed and purged from them in the blood of Christ. *David*, he thought he could never be clean, and purged of his sin, till he had confessed them, and labour'd to repair the ruins of so great offences, which made him so courageously accuse himself, defying the Devil and his flattering pleasures. *David* did not leave one sin, but thrust it head-long out of his heart by Repentance and Contrition.

Use 1. Well, seeing this is the wofull and miserable estate of all impenitent sinners, how should this move every one with speed to repent, to turn to God, to seek to be reconciled to *God* by his Son, and our onely Saviour, to desire pardon and forgiveness of all his

his ſins, to be waſhed and cleanſed from them all in and by the blood and merits of Chriſt? For this know, I ſay, till thou art reconciled to God, doſt repent, art waſhed and cleanſed, thy caſe is fearfull, thou wert better be a Toad than a Man without this: Thou maiſt go in ſilk and velvet, in gay and golden apparel; thou maiſt have a fair body, perfume thee with ſweet odours, &c. but till thou Repent, thou art filthy and loathſome in God's ſight.

Oh how ſhould this ſerve to pluck down the pride of many impenitent tranſgreſſours? Men and women think highly of themſelves, ruſtle it out in Silk and Velvet of the neweſt faſhion; but all this while they know not that their poor ſouls are loathſome in God's ſight, that God hates them, and cannot abide them: Oh then be waſhed, be cleanſed in the blood of Chriſt, which alone can waſh away our ſins.

Oh that men would remember that ſaying of Chriſt, *Thou art poor, blind, miſerable, and naked*; then they would

would say with *Job*, *I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes:* Then they would never give any rest unto their Souls untill they have repented, and got pardon, be reconciled, and washed from their filthy sins.

Isa. 1.16. Rev.3.14 Job 42 6.

Seeing *David* acknowledgeth, that when he shall repent, get pardon of his sins, be reconciled to God, be washed from the filthiness of his sins, then *he shall be clean*, and white, yea, most white, even as Snow. Hence we learn, that as a filthy transgressour, that lives and goes on still in sin without Repentance, there is no creature more ugly, hatefull, and unclean: So the child of God, that doth repent, that is washed in the blood of Christ, reconciled to God, he is a blessed and glorious creature, most beautifull and fair in the sight of God; not by any goodness, or worthiness of his own, but by the mercy of *God* so accompting us, and the Merits and Worthiness of his Son Jesus Christ, in whose Righteousness we shall be found Righteous, and by whose Merits and Worthiness we are covered.

Can. 1.7. Eze.16.5, 10,11,12 Rev. 13.8 1 Cor. 9. 10.

The

The Saints of God go in long white Robes, which are made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Seeing this is the bleſſed and happy eſtate of all thoſe that do truly repent, be reconciled to God, embrace and believe in Jeſus Chriſt, are waſhed and cleanſed from their ſins in his Blood, and covered in his Righteouſneſs: O how ſhould it move every man and woman to run to *God*, to forſake their evil ways, and their filthy ſins, to put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to believe, to become the Sons and Daughters of God. It is an honourable thing to be a Son to an earthly King, to be cloathed in cloth of Gold, &c. But if we compare this with the bleſſed and glorious eſtate of God's children, it is but dung, and beggery, it is but like rotten raggs, and beggars clouts, taken off the Dunghill: *He that is wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the Firmament; and he that converts many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the Sun in the firmament*; O then, again and again, let us repent, let us be reconciled to God, let this wedding Garment, Dan. 12.

ment, which will make us beautified before God.

Use 2. Another use is this, seeing that the state of God's children even in this World is so blessed, and so glorious, so beautifull and excellent, being reconciled to God, washed in the blood of Christ, and cloathed with the most pure Robe of Christ's righteousnes: Here is matter of comfort to all the poor children of God, whom the world is not worthy of. Alas, they are esteemed as beggers, they are esteemed as vile, and base, miserable, and cast-aways, by ungodly men; they are made as the dung in the streets, and as the off-scouring of the world, and men even tread and trample them under their feet: Now what is that which may comfort the hearts of God's children? Surely this, that though they seem vile, base and miserable in the blind eyes of all sinfull men, yet they be most white, beautifull, and glorious in the eyes of God our heavenly Father: Though the world hate us, contemn us, be weary of us, loath and abhor us; let us remember

ber the Lord loves us, takes delight in us, we are fair and moſt beautifull in his ſight. They do not ſee what we be, they cannot know that we are little Princes, Sons, and great Heirs of the Kingdome of Heaven, the Sons and Daughters of the great God; and therefore this may teach us patience, ſeeing we know that God loves us, and that we are dear unto him, though the world hate us: So it is with many Prophets of God, and true believers, whom the world was not worthy of.

1 Joh. 3. 2

Heb. 11.

Laſtly, here is matter of great comfort and conſolation to all grievous ſinners, that have committed many and grievous ſins, that if they will unfeignedly repent, and turn to *God*, embrace and lay hold on Chriſt, God will make them of the curſed firebrands of Hell, heirs of the kingdom of Heaven; of the limbs of the Devil, the members of Jeſus Chriſt; of adulterers, and filthy ſinners, ſuch as *Joſeph* was, chaſte and pure, and the holy ſervants of God. This the Lord promiſeth men, that if they will repent, turn to God, and forſake their ſinful ways,

Then

Isa. 1.18, 19. Then, *Though their sins were as red as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow; though they were as crimson, yet will I make them as clean as wool:* That is to say, though men be guilty of bloody sins, notorious crimes, as *David* of murther, uncleanness, whoredome, adultery, covetousness, swearing, contempt of the word of God, &c. Yet, if thou hast the grace to repent, certainly the Lord will most thorowly purge and wash away all thy sins, he will seal thee a general pardon of them all, if thou wilt onely repent, and lay hold upon Christ.

O then let me speak unto you in the name of God: Hast thou been a vile blasphemer? hast thou been a contemner of the Word? a persecutor of *God's* children? hast thou been a murtherer, a cruel oppressor, usurer? hast thou been an adulterer, a filthy liver? Well, if thou now repent, turn to God, bewail thy sins, beg pardon for them; if thou wilt renounce, leave and forsake them, become a new creature in Christ Jesus, and amend thy sinfull life, and as *David* did, disthrone Satan, and

and cast out of thy mind and heart those Legions of sins, which by nature we have, and by our over-sight committed: Lo then, God doth this day offer mercy unto thee, he will embrace thee, as he did the Prodigal child, he will wash thee in the blood of his own Son, he will cover thee in his Righteousness, he will pardon all thy sins, and never lay them to thy charge, he will make of thee that art a vile and miserable sinner, a very firebrand of Hell, a blessed member of Jesus Christ. And therefore, let not the number or greatness of thy sins hinder thee; for if thou canst repent, God will pardon them all, and receive thee to mercy: O then, if thou wilt not for all this repent, and turn to God, leave and forsake thy sins and impieties, become a new creature in Christ Jesus, but lye in thy sins, and wallow in the filth of them still, and harden thy heart against all the sweet and gracious offers of mercy, how art thou worthy to perish, if thou shalt despise so great Salvation?

Luk. 15.

2 Cor. 5. 19.

VERSE

VERSE VIII.

Make me to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce.

David here intreats for peace of conscience.

David having in the former Verse craved mercy at the hands of God, for the pardon of his sins, which were both many and great; he doth in this Verse beg at God's hands, the blessed fruit of the same: Namely, the blessed and comfortable perswasions of God's mercy, and assurance of his love, for the pardon of his sins, that God would even testifie unto his poor soul, and wounded conscience, by his Spirit inwardly, that he was appeased and pacified with him, and in Jesus Christ reconciled unto him, that so being thus satisfied of God's love, of reconciliation with God, and the remission of his sins, his wounded conscience might be comforted, his dying soul, and heavy heart might be restored, and his exceeding sorrow might be mitigated and asswaged.

Sin had taken away his inward joy.

Davi

David now at length knew, that Nature was an ill guide to Heaven, therefore he desires the Lord to direct him in his ways, that he might hear of joy and gladness, *That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce.*

Parts of this verse.

In this same Verse note two special points. First, what is the thing *David* so earnestly craved of God: Namely, that he would cause him to have comfortable and happy news of God's mercy, and assurance of the remission of his sins, *Make me to hear, &c.*

Secondly, the end wherefore he so begs and requests for this: Namely, that his broken heart, and bleeding conscience might be comforted, and his unspeakable grief by the feeling of God's love might be finished, *That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce.*

Make me to hear.

AS if he should have said, O Lord, I beseech thee to witness thy love and favour unto me; yea, I beseech thee send thy blessing and holy Spirit, to certifie my conscience

ſcience of the bleſſed pardon of all my ſins, that thou wilt not enter into judgement with me for them.

And that which *David* doth here confeſs of himſelf, all the children of God ſhall one day be ſure to find by experience, that ſin doth ſpoil them of their inward peace and joy. Oh then, if we could remember how ſweet the joy and peace is, which by ſin we loſe, for the vain and tranſitory pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, we would never make ſo bad exchange.

The main point is, what it is that *David* ſo earneſtly craves of God; namely, that God would aſſure him of the bleſſed pardon of his ſins.

But ſome may ſay, this ſeems needleſs, did not the Lord ſend *Nathan* to him, who (after *David* had confeſſed his ſin) told him, *The Lord hath pardoned thy ſins, thou ſhalt not dye.* 2 Sam. 12 13. How then comes it to paſs, that here he prays the Almighty to cauſe him to hear and feel this, the remiſſion of his ſin? I anſwer, firſt, it is true, that *Nathan*, the Prophet of God, did aſſure

assure him of the remission of his sins upon his true repentance: But yet *David*'s heart being wounded with sin, could not so fully feel and find the assurance of God's love, and remission of his sins, and therefore entreats the Lord to certifie his conscience inwardly by his Spirit, and to assure him of the same. Secondly, I answer, that though *David* heard *Nathan* tell him, that the Lord would remit his offences, yet he judged the outward testimony of all men and Angels as nothing, unless the certificate and testimony of the Holy Ghost go with it, inwardly to certifie, assure, and perswade the poor wounded conscience of God's love and favour.

Hence we may learn sundry points of instruction: First, that as *David* prays to be assured of God's love, and the remission of his sins; so every true child of God that believes, and repents of all his offences, may know, and be resolved in the confidence of God's love and favour, and the forgiveness of them all. And in the Articles

Doct. 1. Every child of God may be assured of the pardon of his sins.

ticles of our Faith, we do profess, we believe the Remission of our sins, and Life everlasting: And seeing we pray for this, that God would forgive our sins and trespasses, therefore we believe it, else we sin in praying for it; so that every one that truly repenteth,
2 Pet. 1. and embraceth Jesus Christ, is a new creature, hates vile ways, endeavours in heart and life to please God, that he may know, and be assured that he is reconciled to God, and his sins pardoned,

Use 1. This condemns that hellish Doctrine of the Papists, who teach, and hold, that no man can be assured of the pardon of his sins, unless God send a Revelation from Heaven to do it: And that it is a virtue of Faith, to doubt of God's love. But how did
Ro. 8.38. *Paul* doubt, when he saith, *I am fully*
Job 13.15 *perswaded, &c.* Alas, how dare a vile
19, 25. sinner, not justified nor assured of
Ps. 125.1. God's love, and the pardon of his sins, how dares he come to call on God, and make his prayer unto him? Dares a Traytor come to his King, or speak unto him, not having pardon? Well,

this

sins were forgiven, yet *David* could not be assured, till he felt the inward assurance and certificate of God's Spirit, to perswade and witness the love of God unto him for the pardon of his sins.

Man's testimony of the remission of sins is nothing without the testimony of God's Spirit.

Hence we learn, that it is not the testimony of all men and Angels, that can assure us in our souls of God's love and pardon of our sins, without the inward special certificate and perswasion of God's Spirit, who is called *the Spirit of Adoption*, because he doth reveal, yea, perswade, and also assure our souls that we be adopted. If *Peter*, *Paul*, *Nathan*, yea, all the world, nay, if any Angel from heaven should tell me I am the child of God, yet unless God doth further certifie my conscience inwardly by his Spirit, I should not be assured, but doubt still even as *David* did in this place. Although *Nathan* had said, *Thy sins are forgiven*; yet *David* could not be assured, untill he had the inward and comfortable perswasion of God's holy Spirit. Men cannot know the secret counsel of God, they may de-

Rom. 8. 15.

Note.

ceive, and be deceived; but the Spirit of God knows all things, and the Apostle saith, *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage to fear again; but ye have received the spirit of Adoption,* Rom. 8. 15, 16. *whereby we cry Abba Father. The same spirit beareth witness to our spirit, that we are the children of God, and because ye are Sons, therefore God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, whereby we cry Abba Father.* 2 Cor. 1. 22. Again, *God the Father hath sealed us, and put into our hearts the earnest of his Spirit.* So that you see, it is the onely work of the Spirit, to assure our hearts and consciences of God's love, and the pardon of our sins, and without this inward certificate and assurance of the Spirit, all the testimonies of men and Angels cannot assure our consciences.

Well then, seeing that there can be no assurance in a man's conscience of the remission of our sins, and life eternal, but by the inward certificate and testimony of God's spirit, let us pray for this, labour to find and feel our hearts perswaded and assured inwardly by the Holy Ghost of the pardon

don of our sins, and the love of God in Christ. *Prove your selves, whether ye be in the faith.* And because men are deceived generally with a fond presumption and foolish Opinion, that they be the children of God, and shall be saved; and this carnal presumption is more common than true saving Faith, I will shew how we may know this testimony and certificate of God's love, when it is in our consciences. 2 Cor. 13. 5.

Marks of God's Spirit.

First, the Spirit of God assures no such man remission of his sins, but such as be humbled for them, repent of them, leave and forsake them, become new creatures, and walk in newness of life. And therefore, if thou livest in sin, be neither humbled for them, nor bewail them, hast an intention to live still in thy sins, ignorance, lying, swearing, covetousness, uncleanness, &c. Thou canst have no assurance of God's love; and this assurance of thine, if thou hast any, it is meer self-conceit: For where men do not repent, and turn unto God, and amend their lives, there is no faith, neither is the Spirit of God remaining in

1. That man repents of his sin.

them; and therefore they cannot be assured of God's love and mercy.

2. Is perswaded of the Spirit.

Secondly, the Spirit of Adoption doth not onely tell a man that he is the child of God, but doth by sundry arguments and reasons perswade the child of God, that he is elected, that God loves him, and that his sins be forgiven. But wicked men have no such thoughts in their hearts, onely they have a fond opinion and conceit, which is no good ground, neither did the Spirit of God ever perswade their hearts thereunto.

3. The effects will appear.

We shall know the testimony of God's Spirit, that it is sure and sound, by the fruits and effects of it: For if the Spirit of God do truly testifie the love of God for the remission of our sins, and life eternal; then it will follow, that we shall hate our sins, loath and abhor them, because they grieve our most gracious God and loving Father: Yea, we shall desire in all things to honour the Almighty, to do his will, to please and serve him: So that if we find and feel these things, a true hatred and dislike of sin, because it dis-

dishonours the Lord, a desire to live in holiness and righteousness before him all our days, it is a certain sign, that the Spirit of the Lord doth assure us of our reconciliation with the Lord. But if men find not this, no hatred of sin, no love to obey his Will, and keep his Commandements, but ignorance, rebellion, and the like: Let them brag what they will of their strong faith, feeling of God's love, and I know not what; yet it is certain, they have not the Testimony of God's Spirit which *David* prayeth for here, but a fond and foolish opinion proceeding of self-love, carnal security, and deviliſh presumption, which in the end will fail them.

Make me to hear of joy and gladness.

IN these words note a third point of Doctrine: Namely, whence and where *David* looked for comfort; as from the Word of God, hearing the same opened, and preached unto him: So that in this example we learn, that all true comfort, and spiritual consolation, is to be learned, and searched out of the word of God; that is the

Doct. 3. God conveys comfort unto us by the Ministery of his holy Word.

Store-house of heavenly comfort. And therefore our Saviour Christ bids us search there for consolation;
Joh. 5. 63. *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think to have eternal life.* Again, it is called, *Spirit and Life*, because God uses the Preaching and Ministry of the Gospel to beget spiritual Life.
Joh. 1. 13. It is called, *The word of Truth, even the Gospel of our Salvation.* The Lord might have illuminated the mind of the *Eunuch*, *Acts* 8. by the immediate
Ep. 1. 13. working of his own Spirit, and have made him understand the Scripture which he was reading, without any interpreter, but it pleased the Lord to do it by the Ministery of *Philip*: He might have likewise communicated his Spirit to *Cornelius*, *Acts* 10. But the Lord would not do it, but by the Ministery of *Peter*, according to that of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 1. 11. *It hath pleased the Lord by the foolishness of preaching, to save so many as believe*; and so many shall believe, as are ordained to eternal Life. If then thou be desirous with *David, to hear of joy and gladness*, and to have assurance of the pardon

pardon of thy ſins, then reverence the Miniſtery of the Word, by which the Lord communicateth his Spirit to ſuch as he will ſave. And ſurely this muſt needs be an exceeding comfort to all the children of God, that God doth not onely freely forgive them their ſins, but alſo telleth them of the forgiveneſs of the ſame, ſealing up their hearts by his holy Spirit, the teſtimony thereof.

Seeing God hath appointed the Miniſtery of his holy Word, to be the means to work all true and ſpiritual comfort: Oh then, in all our needs, wants, and diſtreſſes, let us ſearch the Word of God, there is comfort to be found, many heavenly and ſweet promiſes of the Goſpel, to quicken and renew our poor diſtreſſed ſouls; and this the Prophet *David* knew by good experience, that there is more found comfort in the feeling of *God's* love, than in all the World beſides. It may well be compared to the Tree, St. *John* ſpeaketh of, which beareth twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of the Tree ſerve to cure and heal diſeaſed

Uſe 1.

Pſal. 119. 55. Pſ. 84. 1. Pſal. 45. Pſal. 4.

Rev. 22. 2.

eaſed and wounded ſouls, and the fruit of the Tree of the Word of God is moſt ſweet and pleaſant; and therefore let us, if we would deſire true comfort indeed, ſeek it in the means; namely, in the Word and Miniſtery of the holy Goſpel.

Uſe 2. This ſheweth, that all thoſe be enemies unto their own ſouls, that deſpiſe the Miniſtery of the Word, and the Preaching of the Goſpel. If ever thou find one jot of true comfort, thou muſt have it in the means that God hath ordained; namely, in the Miniſtery of the Word: Let men ſeek it elſewhere, and they ſhall find none. Men may ſeek delight and joy in their Gold and Silver, in merry Company, in this, or that, as men uſe to do; but (alas) they cannot find it there; yea, experience ſheweth, that diſtreſſed ſouls, full of woe and miſery, could never find true comfort in any thing, ſave in the Miniſtery of the Word of God, and there they have found endleſs comfort, by hearing of the bleſſed and ſaving promiſes of the Goſpel; and therefore, if a man ſhall neglect,

or

or deſpiſe the Word preached, how can they ever find joy, or gladneſs, or any dram of ſaving comfort?

Whereas *David* craves of God, that he would cauſe him to hear of joy and gladneſs, that is, that his ſins were all pardoned, and he reconciled to God in Chriſt, that ſo he might have ſome good matter of joy and gladneſs. For the eye of *David*'s reaſon made him ſee more than the eye of Nature could let him ſee; for till *Nathan* did open the cauſe by a Similitude, he thought all was well on his part, which took *David*'s ears and attention the better.

We learn hence, that there is no ſound joy nor comfort in any man or woman, but onely in the free pardon of his ſin, and feeling of God's love in Chriſt: And all other love which men do frame and deviſe unto themſelves, alas, it is but from the teeth outward, it is not ſound, nor durable, it is but carnal, and earthly, and will eaſily be loſt: *Thus ſaith the Lord, let not the wiſe man rejoyce in his wiſdom, nor the ſtrong man in his ſtrength,*

Uſe 3. Doct. 4. Where ſin is not pardoned, there can be no true joy.

Jer. 9. 23.

nor the rich man in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he knoweth me, to be the Lord; and without this there can be no perfect joy, as we see in *David*, and so in all distressed offenders, till they feel the assurance of *God*'s love for the pardon of their sins.

Use 1. This shews, that the common joy of most men and women, is but a carnal joy, earthly, and vain; it is not spiritual, it is not true joy: For all the while they eat, drink, make themselves merry, laugh, and be jovial, they live in sin, in danger of God's anger and condemnation; no feeling of God's love, no assurance of Salvation; and then how can they have any true joy? for this proceeds in the assurance of God's love, and the remission of sin: *The kindom of God stands not in meat and drink, but in righteousnes, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; but unto the wicked there is no peace.*

Ro. 14. 7.

Esay 57. 21.

Object. *Object.* But do we not see, that wicked men that live in sin, that be notorious sinners, swearers, blasphemers, drunkards, &c. that these live in mirth and jollity, in eating, drinking, in

in eaſe, and idleneſs; and the children of heaven have much ſorrow, and heavineſs, grief, trouble, and wrong?

Anſw. Yea, it is true, that wicked men that live in ſin, paſs their days in eating, drinking, ſport, and paſtime, no ſorrow, nor heavineſs, but ſpend their days in pleaſure; *but ſuddenly they go down to Hell.* *Anſw.* Job 21.13 Pſal. 32.

Now, who will call this a true joy? Nay, it is a ſwiniſh and brutiſh joy, carnal and fleſhly, for if they knew all, and ſaw their miſery, that they be in danger of God's eternal vengeance, of Hell and Damnation, Oh then they would mourn, and turn all their mirth into tears. If a Traitor be apprehended, arraigned, convicted, and condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and look for nothing but preſent death, and execution, and yet for all the ſentence pronounced unto him, that he ſhould dye, would fall to eating and drinking (as the world goes now) rather than to pray, and repent him of his wickedneſs; thinking onely to riot and revel, to chear his heart before he depart this world, would

would not all men say he was a mad man, and out of his wits? This is the case of all lewd men, they already are condemned, they want nothing but execution, and lye in danger of Hell-fire: Alas, what cause have they to be merry, but rather mourn and grieve? therefore their mirth is but madness.

Jam. 4.9.

Use 3. Seeing then we can have no peace of conscience, nor any sound comfort untill we have the feeling of God's love, and full assurance of the remission of our sins, let us never give any rest to our souls, untill we have repented, and got some blessed perswasion of the Almighties love in Christ; and some warrant from his Spirit that our sins are done away; for the Kingdome of the Lord stands not in any outward things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. Alas, if any of us were condemned to Death, lying in Prison, looking for nothing but present execution, what could do us good? There were then no joy in wife, nor children, lands nor livings, meat nor musick; No, no, unless we have the King's pardon, we can-

Rom. 14. 17.

cannot be merry, but would contemn all those things: Even just so, when a poor sinner is arraigned, and condemned in his own conscience for his offences, hath no feeling of God's love and mercy for the remission of them, how is it possible that he should have one dram of joy, till the Lord in mercy seal to his poor soul a general pardon by his Spirit, dipped in the blood of Christ Jesus? Well then, let us never be at peace, nor give any rest unto our souls, untill we have got a comfortable perswasion of *Gods* mercy for pardon of our sins.

That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce.

THese words contain in them the second part of this Verse; and is as much, as if the Prophet should have said, O Lord, I intreat thee for Christ Jesus sake, to forgive me my heinous and bloody sins, and give me the blessed assurance of the same in my soul and conscience, that so feeling and finding that thou art reconciled, and hast pardoned my sins, my soul which is wounded and overwhelmed with grief, and

Second part of the verse.

and ſorrow, as my bones and moſt ſtrong parts are waſted and conſumed, and my ſtrength decayed, may be reſtored, cheered up, and gladded.

By this ſpeech he would ſhew his extreme grief, and ſorrow for his ſins, which was ſo extreme, that it waſted and conſumed his ſtrength, dried up his bones, and ſpent his marrow.

Pſal. 32. 3, 4.

Doct. 5. No ſorrow in the godly like the ſorrow for ſin.

Hence we ſee, that there is no ſorrow to the heart of God's children, like that ſorrow which is for ſin, and offendeth our moſt gracious God and mercifull Father. Great is the grief of an Husband, that loſeth a kind and virtuous Wife: And who can expreſs the ſorrow of a Father, or Mother, for the death of their dear and only child? But yet all the ſorrow in the world, is not compared unto the ſorrow and grief of heart for ſins: This will wound the very conſcience, and cauſe much weeping and wailing, and great heavineſs; it will even weaken the body, and ſtrength of nature; and if it be of any long continuance, it will waſt the bones, and conſume away the fleſh: *When I held my tongue, my bones conſumed.*

Lu. 16. 2. Pſal. 32. Pſal. 6. 2. Pſal. 38.

And

And the reaſon is this, becauſe a poor ſinner, being wounded in conſcience for ſin, and not feeling the love and mercy of God for pardon, ſees nothing but Hell, nothing but damnation and the wrath of God, which is a fearfull thing; for this cauſeth torments, and fears, and terrours, and makes even a Hell in a wounded conſcience: And of all plagues, and judgements, what can be more terrible and fearfull, than to ſee the heavy weight and burthen of God's anger, which is unſupportable? For as *Solomon* ſaith, *A man may bear his ſickneſs, and infirmity, but a wounded conſcience who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14. Again, *It is a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Heb. 10. 21.

Seeing this is the woefull fruit of ſin, that it thus woundeth the conſcience, and waſteth the fleſh, and the bones, we ſee how God hateth ſin even in his deareſt children, ſo as if they will needs ſin and rebell againſt God, they muſt feel the woefull and terrible ſmart of it. And therefore let us above all things ſhun it, avoid it, not dare to commit it: Oh it will coſt *Uſe* 1.

coſt thee dear, it will make thy heart to ake, it will breed thee much woe and miſery in ſoul and body.

Uſe 2. We ſee the miſerable blockiſhneſs of all carnal men and women, who are not aſhamed to ſay, that they had rather deal with God, then with men for ſin: But alas, they never knew nor felt the weight of ſin, but if God ſhould once open their eyes, and let them ſee their ſins, and feel the weight of his anger for them, O then they will confeſs, it is a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of God. *If he be angry* (ſaith *David*) *bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him.*

Uſe 3. Let us learn, that it is not ſome light ſorrow, or ſmall ſigh, or, Lord have mercy upon me, will ſerve for our ſins gainſt God: No, no, let us labour to be humbled more deeply for our tranſgreſſions, ſeeing by them we offend a moſt mercifull God; yea, if it were poſſible, to ſhed even tears of blood for our offences; for all were little enough to ſhew or expreſs that grief for ſin we ſhould or ought to have.

Which

Which thou haſt broken.

THat is, which thou, O God, my Lord, in juſtice haſt juſtly inflicted upon me, for my great and grievous offences.

Hence then behold, that *God* is moſt righteous and juſt in puniſhing, and correcting the iniquities of men: He cannot wink at ſin in any man, no, nor in them that be dear and near unto him, as may appear in his holy Servant *David*, a man after his own heart, a holy Prophet of the Lord; yet, if he rebell, and play the wanton, he is ſure to be ſcourged for it, as here in this place: So when he numbred the people, ſo *Hezechiah*, *Jeruſalem* the holy City; yea, if the Son of the Almighty, which had no ſin, take but our iniquities upon him, he muſt be puniſhed, the juſtice of God will ſeize upon him. And the reaſon of this is manifeſt, becauſe God doth ſo hate ſin, that he cannot wink at it in any.

Doct. 6. There is no reſpect of perſons with God.

1 Sam 24 Eſay 39. Mat. 23.

If the Lord doth ſo ſharply and ſeverely puniſh iniquity in his deareſt children, whom he loves beſt, Oh then what will become of all thoſe that

Uſe 4.

that are his enemies? *If to the green Tree, what to the dry?* If judgement begin at the house of God, Oh then what shall be the end of those that obey not the Word of God? if God do so severely handle his own people, then much more the wicked and prophane ones.

1 Pet. 4. 17. Jer. 20. 29.

May rejoyce.

Doct. 7. Pardon of sin brings true joy.

HEnce we learn, that there is wonderfull joy and gladness in the hearts of all those who have the pardon of their offences: It is a matter of endless comfort to feel the love of the Almighty in a man's soul; to know God to be my gracious Father, Jesus Christ to be my Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost to be my Comforter, it is matter of endless comfort; *Blessed is he whose wickedness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.* Again, *The Kingdome of God stands not in meat and drink, but in the Righteousness, Peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

Psal. 32.

Rom. 14. 17.

We learn hence, that such as continue in any known sin unrepented of, cannot look for peace from God; for where goes sin, there goes the curse,

Esa

Esay 48. *There is no peace to the wicked:* God doth even wage war, and enter into a combat against all impenitent sinners. This the Prophet speaketh, *Ps.* 7. God doth whet his Sword, bend his Bow, and make it ready against the wicked; and therefore, if we want this, and have not the feeling of God's love, and assurance of his mercy for the pardon of all our offences: Oh then let us labour for it, use all means to attain unto it, pray for it, and give no rest unto thy soul untill thou hast it; and if thou hast it, Oh then make much of it, lose it not though thou mightest gain a Kingdom; for all the world will not afford one dram of comfort without it; and take heed of sin, which will drive it away, dim it, and damp it, and deprive us of the feeling of it.

Use 2. We often see, that ungodly men do offer great wrong unto the children of the Lord. Oh, say prophane Beasts and Atheists, these Professors, these Puritans, they are always heavy and dumpish, there is no comfort, no joy, no true mirth in them, they are always

ways sad and heavy. I tell thee thou art deceived, they have more sound joy, and true christian mirth in one hour, than the wicked Atheists of the World have in a whole year. Yea, who should be merry, if the Children and Servants of God be not merry? Who can rejoyce more than he that is the child of God, that feels God's love and favour in his soul, is a Member of Jesus Christ, and to whom
Rom. 8. 1. there is no fear of condemnation?

It is true indeed, in regard of our sins and offences, we have cause to mourn and lament, yea, to weep, if it were possible, tears of blood; but in regard of God's mercy, in that we be reconciled to God, delivered from Death, Hell, and Damnation, by the Death and Merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour, in whom we believe, we can be merry, yea, rejoyce in all estates, in sickness as well as in health, in poverty, as plenty; in prison as in liberty. Look on *Peter* in Prison, *Paul* in the Stocks; whereas wicked men have onely a carnal and worldly joy in their friends, riches, honours, plea-

sures.

sures, and delights, if these be gone and lost, and their joy lies in the dust, then they are dumpish, heavy, and sad, no joy then, no rejoycing, but a Knife, a Halter, a Pond; even become in a melancholy humour, their own Judge and Executioner.

So that by this we see a clear and notable difference between the joy of wicked men, and the joy of God's children: The joy of wicked men it is carnal, and worldly, and earthly; the joy of God's children is spiritual, inward, and heavenly; theirs is onely in time of prosperity; but the joy of God's children is durable, permanent, lasting for ever in Life and Death; whereas the joy of wicked men ends even in Death, and with horrour of Conscience.

VERSE IX.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

David can no way have peace till his sins be pardoned.

IN these words *David* doth the third time renew his former Petition and suite unto

unto God for the pardon of his sins, as one wonderfully amazed, and cast down in the sence and feeling of God's anger for his sins.

Parts of the verse.

And the requeſt hath two parts: First, becauſe he had provoked the Lord to anger, and was in danger of his diſpleaſure, he intreats him to turn away his angry countenance from beholding his ſins. As if he ſhould have ſaid, Oh Lord, I have committed great and grievous ſins in thy ſight, and given thee cauſe to be angry with me: But, Lord, I beſeech thee caſt away my ſins out of thy ſight, look not on them, neither call them to accompt, but put them all out of mind.

Secondly, he intreats the Lord to blot them out of his book of remembrance; alluding to them that keep a Book of debt, who write all down that is owing unto them, and in token all is diſcharged, blot and croſs the book: So he requeſts the Lord to croſs the book of debt, becauſe he was not able to pay the debt; therefore he requireth, that he would in the

the blood of the promised Messias be content to blot the book of his account.

When as *David* prays to God that he would turn away his face, that is, that he would not call his sins to mind to punish them, but forget and forgive them, and as it were cast them behind his back, as men use to do with things they will not remember. Hence we may learn, that there is nothing so fearfull unto us poor distressed sinners, as is the terrible anger, and frowning countenance of the most righteous God, which, if a man beholdeth, and seeth the Lord to frown upon him, it is impossible that all the creatures in heaven and earth should give him any comfort: No, *David* a King, being in danger of his just anger for sin, could have no joy nor comfort untill he was reconciled unto God, and did behold his loving countenance turned towards him, in and by the means of Jesus Christ, and through a lively faith.

Doct. 1. God's anger most fearfull to the godly.

1 Cor. 16. 5. Psal. 5. 5. Ps. 45. 7.

And no marvel, though the Propher intreated the Lord to turn away his

his angry face; for the anger of God is most terrible, yea, more heavy than if a Milstone, yea, Heaven and Earth should be laid upon a man's soul: For
Rom. 8. 3 as S. *Paul* saith, *If God be with us, who can be against us?* so if he be against us,
Heb. 10. who can be with us? *It is a fearfull thing to fall into his hands.* And if the
Mar. 5. 30 wrath of the King be as the roaring of a Lyon, how much more is the wrath of God to be feared, who can cast both body and soul into Hell?

Yea, so long as the children of the Almighty enjoy his favour, see his loving countenance, they are able to endure much, though men torment them, persecute them, rail on them, they can endure much misery; but if once they lose the feeling of God's love, and see his angry face, and frowning countenance turned towards them, Oh then nothing can comfort them, till they obtain his favour a-
Job 13. 15. gain. How many things did *Job* suffer without impatiency, yea, the loss of all he had, so long as he felt the loving favour of *God* towards him; but when he seeth the Lord to arm himsel-

self like an enemy, and like an angry God, then he was no longer able to endure; and what can be more terrible to a poor sinner, than to wrastle with the anger of God, than which, nothing is more fearfull? And this can every child of God testifie in his own conscience by experience, feeling the heavy weight of the Lord's anger. Psa. 6. 1.

Use 1. Seeing it is so fearfull a thing for man to provoke the Lord to wrath, and behold his angry and frowning countenance: This condemns the blockishness and senceless security in most folks, who, though they do nothing but sin against God daily, and so provoke him to anger and wrath against them, yet do not so much as say, *Alas, what have I done?* though they lye smoking under the heavy wrath of God, to be destroyed for their sins. Men fear the wrath and terrible face of great men, especially their Prince: but hard-hearted transgressours fear not the wrath of the Eternal God. Well, let all rebellious and stiff-necked men remember what Christ saith, *Fear not him that can kill* Vers. 36.

the body, and can do no more; but I will tell you whom you shall fear, fear him that can kill both body and soul, and can cast them both into Hell-fire; fear him.

Use 2. Because nothing moves the Lord to anger, and to be displeased with men and women but sin, therefore let us above all things shun sin, not dare to rebell against God, and provoke his wrath: *Your sins have made a separation.* Isa. 49.2. Oh then take heed of sin: And if thou wilt offend, be sure thou shalt find and feel the wrath of God; and if thou wouldest escape the wrath which is so terrible, take heed of sin; and especially, if thou hast sinned, not to lye and continue in sin: It is that which makes God angry, because we do not repent for sin. We see men be too carefull to shun such things as offend great persons, and procure their displeasure, for fear if they take occasion against them, they turn them out of their Farms, rack their Rents, &c. Oh then fear to offend God, who will reject and cast thee off for ever, and encrease thy judgement.

Use 3. If we have sinned, and thereby provoked

voked the Lord to anger by our ſins, as *David* did, and feel his diſpleaſure, and ſee his frowning countenance; Oh then let us give no reſt unto our ſouls, till we be reconciled unto him, till we obtain mercy and favour at his hands: For ſo long as we ſee his anger and his frowning countenance, alas, we can have no peace nor comfort in the World. If a man ſhould have the favour of all men, great and ſmall, Nobles, Lords, &c. yet if the King hate him, and cannot abide to hear of him, what can all this do him good? So if a man had the favour of all men and Angels; yea, if it were poſſible, all the things on earth ſhould ſeek to uphold a man, yet if God be angry, and diſpleaſed with him, his wrath would cruſh him in pieces. Well then, when we treſpaſs againſt God, and ſo provoke him to anger, let us uſe all means to obtain his favour; let us repent of our ſins, be humbled for them, acknowledge and confeſs them; let us pray for pardon, and intreat the Lord to turn away his face and angry countenance.

And as we see, if a man offend a great person, he will ride and run night and day, send gifts, make friends, and all to obtain his favour again; even so must we seek for the favour of God. And as *Absalon*, having sinned against his Father, sent *Joab*, and the woman of *Tekoah* to get his pardon, and to appease his Father's anger: So we must seek to Jesus Christ, to be our Mediator, to turn his Father's anger from us.

Sam. 22. 4.

Use 4. Lastly, seeing the anger of God is so fearfull a thing, and so unsupportable, and the loving favour of God is Life it self, Oh then let us make much of God's loving countenance, and do nothing in word or deed that may turn his mercy and loving favour from us, but use all good means possible to continue the same; for if we love him, he will love us: If we honour him, he will honour us. It must be true obedience that we honour God with; for he is the searcher and trier of all hearts whether they be right or no; God trieth our hearts, that is, our love; he trieth our reins,

that

that is, our sincerity. God knows our words and thoughts long before we utter them; he knoweth the words of our Bed-chamber, which a learned Divine calls twinkling words, though but a whisper; therefore *David* humbly desires that the Lord would hide his face from beholding his iniquity.

Hide thy face from my sins.

THat is, pardon them, and do not call me to account, to punish me for them. *Moses* saith, *Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee, and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance:* That is, the Lord beheld their sins that so he might punish them for the same. So, when the Lord hideth his face from our sins, it is all one as to pardon them. Now sin is contrary to the essence of God, and if we sin, then follows punishment; for sin and punishment are unseparable companions: Sin is an averting of the heart from the Creator; remove sin, which is the cause of punishment, and the effect will cease. A little Leaven doth leaven the whole lump: so one little sin begets another, and one petty sin destroys

the Creature. When a man casteth a thing behind his back, or turns his face from it, it is a sign he would forget it, and not remember it: Even so, when the Lord hideth his face from our sins, it is all one as to pardon them, as I said before. Again, *I will put away your sins, and scatter them as a mist*, saith the Lord; and we know that mists that appear a little time, are by and by scattered and gone. *Hezekiah* confesseth, *That God did cast all his sins behind his back*; alluding to men, who, when they purpose to forget, or not to remember a thing, turn their backs upon it. Again, *I will cast all their sins in the bottom of the Sea*, alluding to *Pharaoh*, that wicked man, whom God drowned in the bottom of the Red-Sea. And thus we have the interpretation of the words.

Esay 39. 17.

Mic. 7. 19

Doct. 2. Note how God pardons sins.

Here we see how, and after what manner the Lord pardons our sins; namely, when he doth forgive and forget them, and turn his face from them, hath no purpose to remember them, or to punish us for them: And in a word, when he doth upon our true repen-

repentance, for the Merits of Christ, eſteem ſin, as no ſin, as though it had never been committed, when he covers them, and imputeth them not unto us. Indeed, every ſin that we commit, is a falling from God, and a ſtep from Grace. Pſ. 32. 1.

Seeing the Lord forgiveth ſin after this manner, and even doth in mercy forgive and forget our ſins, puts them out of his remembrance, caſts them behind his back, and will never call them to mind any more: Here is matter of joy, and endleſs comfort to diſtreſſed ſouls; if thou haſt once repented of thy ſins truly, and been aſſured of God for the pardon of them, though thou maiſt remember them, and thy conſcience accuſe thee for them, as *Job*, and *David*, who were troubled for the ſins of their Youth; yet I ſay, thou ſhouldeſt remember them. God will never remember them any more to judgement, or condemnation, nor plague nor puniſh thee for them: He caſts them out of his mind, and turns his face from them; and therefore, if he once *Uſe* 1.

pardon sin, he pardoned it for ever: *For the decree and counsel of God is unchangeable*, he alters not, and therefore if once he gives pardon for sin, he never revokes it, but loves to the end; *The gifts of God are without repentance.*

Rom. 11. 29.

Use 2. Seeing the Lord in pardoning of sins, doth turn his face from them, forgets them, and forgives them, and will never speak of them, nor call them to mind any more: We learn hence, in pardoning of wrongs and injuries done to us, to imitate the example of God our heavenly Father, to pardon them, so as we never call them to mind again, that we forgive and forget all wrongs and injuries, trample them under our feet. But it is a common speech of many ungodly men and women, if they do them any harm or injury, they will forgive them, but they will never forget them; and accordingly so they deal, though for a time they can shew a smooth countenance, and give fair words, yet if ever they get them in their danger, they will fetch them over, they will shew their spleen and malice,

malice, and pour out all their poyson. But let such take heed, for how can they say, *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*, and yet do not forgive, and forget wrongs? If the Lord should deal thus with us, he should confound us: For God is provoked by us every moment, and we are indebted unto him ten thousand Talents, yet he is intreated of us, and he is reconciled unto us; ought not we therefore to forgive one another after his example? This is the reason used by the Apostle *Paul*. Col. 3. 12, 13. *Now therefore, as the Elect of God, holy, and beloved, put on the bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel to another, even as Christ forgave, even so do ye.* It were wofull with us, if God were not ready to forgive: or we find our selves ready to offend, and one sin unpardoned is sufficient to make us condemned. The second branch of the Petition is in the end of the verse, in these words immediately following.

. Part of he verſe.

And blot out all mine iniquities, &c.

THat is, blot them out of thy Book of accompts, and that Bill and Debt-book wherein they ſeem to be written or ingraven, for ſo much doth the ſpeech import: The Prophet alluding to men that keep Books of accompts, wherein they write all their Debts; even ſo the Lord hath as it were his Book of accompts, wherein are Regiſtred all the ſins of men and women, when, and where, and howſoever committed.

Doct. 3. All our ſins are known to God.

Then hence we learn, that all our ſins are known to God, he hath them all (as it were) written down in a Book of Accompt, and unleſs they be blotted out in this Life, they ſhall one day be called over, even at the Day of judgment, *The Book ſhall be opened*, and every man's conſcience ſhall be as a Bill of Inditement to accuſe and condemn him. This is that which is told by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, ch. 16. *The ſin of* Judah *is written with the pen of Iron, and the point of a Diamond.* And *Job* hath it, *Thou haſt ſealed up our ſins in a bag.* By all which places it appeareth,

Rev. 20.

peareth, that all our ſins are known to God, as perfectly as if they were noted in a Book, and unleſs we repent, they ſhall one day be called over, and laid to our charge when our Book ſhall be opened.

Seeing that all our ſins are well known to God, and the Lord hath them all (as it were) written down in a Book, and this Book ſhall one day be opened; and if our ſins be not blotted out before Death come, and this Debt be not cancelled, then they ſhall be brought to light, and we ſhall be caſt into Priſon till we have paid the uttermoſt farthing. Then we ſee it ſtands us all in hand while we live, to labour to have this Book cancelled, that our ſins may be put out, and all Debts croſſed: For if they be found uncancelled at Death, and at the day of Judgement, if they be found then upon Record, ſurely then it is too late to look for mercy, or cry, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*, and therefore it is a matter of endleſs moment, which we are all moſt carefully to think upon, that this Book may be croſſed, *Uſe* 1.

ſed, and our ſins cancelled, ſo that we be not in the great Day of the general Judgement called to an accompt for them.

But how might we do, that we might have our offences blotted out? We are not able to pay the Debt, we owe the LORD ten thouſand Talents, and cannot pay one penny; what ſhall we do to have the whol. ſum paid?

To this I anſwer: The Lord is like a mercifull Creditour, if his Debtor be not able to pay, let him confeſs the Debt, and he will ask him no more, but will willingly and freely pardon all: So the Lord God, ſeeing that we are by no means able of our ſelves to pay the Debt, yet if we confeſs it, and deſire pardon, he will forgive it. And yet, becauſe he is juſt, as he is mercifull, therefore we muſt needs look for this; that his Juſtice ſhould be ſatisfied, and that is done by the means of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, he is become our Surety, he is content to take our Debt on him, to become Pay-maſter, and ſo, when re-

nothing else could do it, he was content to suffer Death, even the cursed Death of the Cross, and to wash away our sins by his own heart blood.

So then, we see the means how our sins are blotted out: Namely, when we do not repent of them, bewail them, be humbled for them, leave and forsake them, lay hold on Jesus Christ, and apply unto us his Death and Passion; then by the blood of Christ all our sins shall be washed away.

VERSE X.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.

David new Petition.

DAvid having hitherto craved at the hands of God pardon of his sins, doth here put up a new Petition to God; namely, for Regeneration, or the new Birth, That God would cast him in a new mould, and make him a new man: And that God would in mercy go forwards with the blessed Work of Sanctification begun by his

his Spirit, and now is interrupted by his sins.

Our reconciliation with God stands in two parts: Namely, pardon of sin and regeneration. And *David* having in the former Verse prayed for grace and mercy, that God would have mercy upon him, pardon his sins, and wash them all away in the blood of his Son: Now he doth beg for Regeneration, and encrease of the blessed Work of Sanctification, which is begun, and continued by the holy Spirit of God: For though the Lord shall pardon sins past, yet if he gives not power against sin for time to come, we shall marre all quickly, and commit either the same again, or else some greater sin; therefore he craves power against sin in time to come, that he may not fall into the like again.

Parts of this verse.

In the tenth Verse, there be two things to be considered: First, he craveth a sanctified heart, because till the heart be pure, no good motion can proceed from thence, no more than sweet water from a bitter fountain:

rain: Secondly, he prays for the renewing of the work of grace, or new birth, and sanctification, which he had by his sins hindered, yea, greatly interrupted; that so his soul and filthy heart being renewed and sanctified, thence might proceed good affections, and holy actions, with continual and constant obedience.

Whereas the Prophet joyns this Petition of Sanctification unto the former of Justification; we learn, that these two graces of God's Spirit, Justification, pardon of sin, and Sanctification, a godly life and conversation, are so knit and united together, that they cannot be separated; so as no man is truly justified by Faith in the blood of Christ, but he is also sanctified by the Holy Ghost: No man can have the pardon of his sin, but he must become a new creature in Jesus Christ. And this appeareth very plain by St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 5. (treating of Justification) *ch.* 6. *vers.* 4, 5. entreating of Sanctification, he shews that these two go ever together, so as he that is not sanctified, is

Doct. 1. Justification and Sanctification go together.

not

not justified; and he that is not regenerate, and born anew by Faith in Christ Jesus, and the work of the Spirit, cannot have remission of his sins.

Use 1. Seeing justification, and pardon of our sins, and sanctification, and newness of Life, cannot be severed in the children of God, no more than fire and heat; then man had need to take heed, least they deceive themselves while they say, *God is mercifull, and they hope all their sins are pardoned in the blood of Christ.* But unless thou be truly sanctified, unless thou be a new creature in Christ Jesus, thou canst have no assurance of the justification and pardon of thy sins; and therefore, if thou live in sin, delight in sin, have no change, no new birth, no reformation of thy heart, certainly thou hast no remission of thy sins as yet, and thy hope is but a foolish and a vain fancy of thine own heart.

Use 2. Hence we learn, to try the assurance of our Salvation by the fruit of our Sanctification: For hereby we may assure our selves that we are justified, if

it we lead a sanctified Life. If we have our conversation in holiness, we shall then have in the end everlasting Life 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. The Apostle sheweth there, *That the foundation of the Lord stands sure, so that the Lord knoweth who are his.* He sheweth also how we shall know that we are the Lords, even by this, Every one for his own assurance must depart from iniquity; and is confirmed by that of St. *John*, 1 Joh. 1. 6,7. *If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.* Oh then, as we glory in the name of Christians, and would be accounted Christs, let us be carefull to bring forth the fruits of Christians, and to lead a sanctified Life; for God hath joyned these two together, so that not all the wit and policy of man whatsoever, is able to separate them.

Create in me a clean heart.

Doct. 7. Gen. 1. 1. Repentance is a new creature.

TO *Create*, is to make a thing of nothing, as God *Created the World*; that is, he made all things of nothing. Hence then learn, that it is as great a work to Create a new heart,

heart, and so to save a sinner, as to create the whole World of nothing; yea, in some respects it seems harder: For in the creation of the World, the Lord but spake the word, and all was made, there was no hinderance, no resistance, or opposition; but in the Creation of the heart anew, there are many lets and hinderances.

First, within a man; every man is an enemy to his own Salvation, and the Flesh resists this same work: Again, the Devil doth labour to hinder by all means possibly, so great a work.

Yea, and besides that, it is a great work to create in a man a new heart. It is also a work of great difficulty, not accomplished without great labour and pain, and therefore it is called a Birth, a Death, a Circumcision: So then, even as no Birth, no Death, no cutting off of the Flesh, can be without pain and sorrow; so the conversion of a sinner is not wrought without pain and sorrow. The Infant is not delivered out of its Mother's womb without pain; and doest thou think

think (O man) to part with sin which is in thee, was conceived with thee, and which, since thy birth-day, unto this present, thou hast nourished with such delight, and not to taste of pain in the new birth? No assuredly, it will not be, but it will cost thee much sorrow, many a sigh, yea, and tears themselves, before thou hast the same wrought effectually in thee.

Seeing it is so hard a thing to have a new and sanctified heart, even as to create the whole world, then we had need to take the greater pains about it, to use all means that God hath appointed: Namely, the Word preached, the Sacraments, Prayer, Meditation in the Law of God, and to cry unto God for the same continually. *Use* 1. Jeh. 17. 17. Act. 15. 9.

We see that there is nothing in man of himself that is pleasing unto God; for *David* prays to have a new heart created in him; and therefore there is no Will nor Motion in any man of himself to please God, all must be new, yea, till the heart is created anew, and sanctified, it is a sink of sin and all uncleanness, full of *Use* 2.

poy-

poysoned lusts and concupiscence, and therefore no freedom or will to any thing that is good, till God create this new heart.

Use 3. Seeing *David* prayeth to God to create a clean heart within him, it must admonish us all to look unto our hearts that they be clean; for it is the Fountain of all Life and Motion. Now such as the Fountain is, such will the water be; such as the Roots, such will the fruit be; and if the heart be evil, it will send forth filthy lusts and desires. And as our Saviour saith, *Out of the heart commeth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false testimonies, slanders; these are the things which defile the man.* Mat. 15. 19. Oh then let us look unto our hearts, and labour for sanctified hearts, intreat the Lord to create them in us, and to take away our stony and corrupt hearts, and to give us good and honest hearts, sanctified by his Spirit; for look how our hearts be, so will our thoughts, words, and works be: A good heart will have good words, and good deeds; but a stinking and Luk. 8.

corrupt

corrupt heart will send forth vile and filthy words and works.

Quæst. Doth *David* desire no more at all but a clean heart? hath he no care of his words, and of his actions, of his outward life and conversation? *Object.*

Answ. Yes verily, *David*, though he names but the heart, yet understands the whole man both outward and inward, but because that is the Fountain of all, therefore he names that; and if the heart be pure, it will make the whole man good: For the heart of a man is like the great wheel of a Clock, it is the first mover either to good or ill. *Answ.*

Hence mark, that in true Sanctification, where the work is truly wrought, it is not onely outward in word and deed, but it is inward, and of the whole man; both body and soul, heart, will, judgement, affection, conscience, words, and works. *The God of peace sanctifie you throughout*: So that the mind, which by nature is full of blindness and ignorance, is enlightned by the true knowledge of God, revealed in his Word, the *Doct.* 2. True sanctification is never in part. 1 Thes. 5. 23.

Will

will flyeth evil, and imbraceth that good; the affections are purged from Rebellion; yea, every part and faculty both of body and soul is sanctified.

Rom. 6. 19. *So that as we have given up our members servants to unrighteousness to work sin; now they become servants of righteousness to holiness:* Yea, the Body is now a fit Temple of the Holy Ghost, fit to perform all duties to God's glory, and the edifying of our brethren. And therefore this must be remembred, that he which is truly sanctified, is wholly sanctified throughout in soul and body.

Use 1. This shews, how thousands in the world be in a miserable case; for (alas) they seem to be religious, and yet are not truly sanctified, for they live in some sin or other: With *Herod* they cherish and nourish in their bosoms many sinfull and rebellious lusts and desires. Well, if thy tongue be not sanctified to cease from ill words, and to speak well; if thy hand or eyes, or ears, &c. if thou be not sanctified throughout in every part, there is no true work of Grace

Mat. 6. 2. Note this well.

no ſound ſanctification; for where it hath true operation or working, there will be a change in all parts and powers of the ſoul and body. Jam. 1.

Let us labour to be aſſured of this bleſſed work of Sanctification, in that we perceive our ſelves purged throughout our minds, will, affection, Reaſon, Conſcience; our Tongue, Hands, Feet, that we deny any ſervice to ſin and Satan, and do willingly conſecrate all to God: For if we keep one part, and neglect another, it will profit no more, than to ſet a ſtrong defence at one part of a Caſtle, and neglect the reſt; or to ſhut one Gate, and let the reſt ſtand wide open. Uſe 2.

Now that we may the better diſcern our eſtate, whether the ſound work of grace be wrought in us, or no; and whether God hath ſanctified our hearts truly, or no; we ſhall know it by theſe three fruits of Sanctification, which are ever found in all them that be truly ſanctified. Notes to know whether this change is wrought in us, or no.

Firſt, a deteſtation and earneſt loathing of our former ſins, in which we 1.

we have delighted and taken pleasure in, with an hearty love of Righteousnes and Holines, and newnes of Life: So as we are loath to offend God in any thing, and are most careful to please him in all things: whereas we carry a purpose not to sin, but can say, *I delight in the Law of God in the inward man*, though we fall by the infirmity of our own flesh.

Rom. 7. 22.

2. Secondly, when we find in ourselves, that from this love of that good, and hatred of evil, we find a earnest desire in our hearts to imbrace the one, and to fly the other: so that from this desire there arises a setled purpose in heart, and a careful endeavour in Life to mortifie our corrupt nature, to subdue the flesh, and in time to come to frame our lives in all things according to the rule of God's holy word: And that we not onely desire this, but use all the blessed means as the Word, Sacrament, Prayer, and Meditation, to perform it.

3. Thirdly, another fruit is this: Namely, when as we find in us this desire, (to do well, and purpose, and

heartily endeavour to kill ſin, and to live to God) 'tis hindred by our ſpiritual enemies, the Devil, World, and the Fleſh; that when we find a grief of heart, a ſpiritual combat between the Fleſh, and the Spirit, whereby we ſtrive and ſtruggle to prevail againſt our ſpiritual enemies, and to overcome them: Then there is wonderfull peace of conſcience, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

Well then, let all men try themſelves, whether God hath by his Spirit truly wrought the work of Sanctification, or not: Firſt, doſt thou hate thy former ſins, and loath them as bane and poyſon, yea, as the Devil himſelf? and doth thy heart love Heavenly duties, Holy and Righteous, which before thou foundeſt bitter? Secondly, doſt thou deſire and endeavour to kill thy corruptions, to ſubdue and mortifie thy luſts and deſires? and doſt endeavour to frame thy Life according to the Rule of God's holy word, and makeſt that thy onely guide? Thirdly, doſt thou grieve at thy faults and infirmities,

ſhunneſt the occaſions of ſin, and doſt wreſtle againſt all the temptations of Satan? and doſt rejoyce in nothing more than to prevail and get the victory? Theſe be goods ſigns and fruits of Sanctification; but, be they wanting, thou canſt not be aſſured thou art truly ſanctified, or haſt any true work of grace as yet begun in thy heart. A ſinners converſion muſt be true, and firm; not for a little, or ſmall ſpace; but daily and hourly. Our actions of Repentance muſt be renewed continually; *Naaman* muſt waſh ſeven times in *Jordan* before he can be clean; we every minute ſin, and therefore the greater need we have to repent; and weep as often: God requires an Univerſal Reformation; then Repentance is happy, when it hath been as large as our tranſgreſſions.

For exhortation. Our heart, that little member, muſt be waſhed, and purged, from murders, theſts, and adulteries. *Pilat* he uſed an outward and a diſſembling kind of waſhing, when his heart condemned Chriſt: But let us waſh our eyes from luſts and deſires of the fleſh; our tongue from

from unclean ſpeeches; our heads from plots of device; our hearts from pride and envy: All ſins are ſpots and blemiſhes, no ſin muſt be left unwaſhed: We waſh daily, but we do not waſh all; we muſt waſh our affections daily, and then we waſh as we ought. We muſt give the Lord preſent Obedience: Let us not venture to ſleep till we have waſhed and cleanſed our hearts, and caſt up our reckonings with God, for the day paſt, for the moſt righteous man that liveth, ſinneth ſeven times a day; and therefore ought not we to take an account of our actions and words in the day, as well as we caſt up our takings in the Shop-book, what we have ſold and got in the day? O let us by all means take heed, in not having our hearts here with *David* purged and waſhed, leaſt ſnatched away by Death on a ſudden, like *Herod*, and like *Zimri* and *Cosby*, we be killed in the very act of cuſins. Therefore let us deſire the Lord ſo to proſper our intentions, that we may daily waſh our ſelves with true Repentance; ſaying with *David*,

Create in me, O Lord, a new heart, O GOD.

Doct. 4. God the Author of Sanctification

HEnce we learn who is the Author of this work of Sanctification: Namely, it is the proper work of the third Person in Trinity, the Holy Ghost; he doth sanctifie the Elect: *The very God of peace sanctifie you throughout.* The faithfull are begotten, *Not of flesh and blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

1 Thes. 5. 23.

Joh. 1. 13.

This work of Sanctification cannot flow from our Parents; *For who can bring a clean thing out of filthiness?* the new Birth is not of blood, nor of the Will of the flesh, nor of man, but of Christ, *Who* 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *is made unto us Sanctification.* Col. 1. 19. *In him are hid all the treasures of it.* Joh. 3. 16. *Of whose fulness we receive grace for grace.*

Again, it is said, *A new heart will I give them, and a new spirit will I put into them: And I will take away their stony hearts, and give them hearts of flesh:* God the Father sanctifieth in giving his Son Christ unto us; so Christ sanctifieth, in washing us from our sins in his blood, and the Holy Ghost in

Ezek. 36. 26.

in applying Christ Jesus his Death and Resurrection to us: And thus the work of Regeneration, or Sanctification, is by God wrought alone in the Elect. God created man without his help, but he will not save us without our help; and the reason is good, because he hath given man the means and ability to step forwards towards Salvation; and that man that doth not go forwards, goes backwards.

Well then, this shews that man hath no freedom of will of heavenly things pertaining to eternal Life, but all is of God; Faith, Salvation, Life eternal, all comes from God; and therefore let us use all good means appointed of God, and seek this at his hands, who alone can, and will do it.

2. Part of this verse.

Now follows the second part of the Verse: *And renew a right Spirit within me:* Where *David* craves grace from God to become a new Creature, and withall, that God would enable him by his Spirit to be faithfull and constant in time to come, and therefore requires of God a stable mind, a firm Spirit; that is, not onely a constant

purpose to walk uprightly with God, but power and strength from his Spirit to become faithfull and constant, as fearing his own weakness, if the Lord should leave him to himself; for as God gives grace to obey, so he must give grace to persevere. As if he should have said; O Lord, thou hast begun this blessed work of Regeneration, and new Birth, by thy holy Spirit: But I, like a sinfull wretch, by Sin and Rebellion have hindred the same, and broken off the gracious work of thy holy Spirit: Now I beseech thee, O Lord, lay to thy hand again, and afresh begin to renew the work of thy Spirit, even the blessed work of the New Birth; and withall, grant that in time to come, I may be strengthned in the inner man by thy holy Spirit, and may be made thereby firm and constant to continue; yea, to grow and hold out to the end in holy Obedience.

Doct. 5. The sin of man breaks off the work of Sanctification.

Mark, that *David* acknowledgeth he had broken off the work of God his Spirit in him, and interrupted the same, and hindred the work of Sanctifi-

ctification by his sins, and disobedience. And therefore we learn, that after God hath touched a man's heart to repent, and sanctified him by his Spirit, if he sin, and rebell against God, he doth what lies in him to cut off the work of Grace, and to hinder the work of his Salvation, and break off the gracious work of Sanctification and new Birth; and if the Almighty should leave him, he should fall clean away from Grace: For the Spirit of God is glad, and joyfull, when as we are carefull to avoid all those ways which offend God, and wound our souls; when we seek to have good hearts, faith unfeigned, and a good conscience, then the Spirit of God doth daily proceed with the work of the new Birth and Sanctification; but after we rebell against God, and commit sin, we grieve the holy Spirit of God, and vex him, that he is compelled by our lewdness to leave off the work in the middest, because we suffer not our selves to be wrought upon, but we will follow our own lusts and liking; and when the Spirit of Eph. 4. 30.

God ceaseth to renew us, and to beget our hearts to God, then there rises blindness of mind, so as we cannot conceive and feel the love of God, as in *David*: And then this gracious work of the Spirit being interrupted, there arises grief and sorrow of soul and conscience.

Use 1. Well, seeing this is the fruit of our sins, against knowledge and conscience, they hinder the work of Grace and New Birth, and interrupt the blessed work of Sanctification, begun by God's Spirit, and bring blindness of mind, and hardness of heart: Oh then let us take heed of sin, intreat the Lord that he would give us grace for ever to hide his word in our hearts, that we might not sin against his Majesty, and that he would not leave us to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, but that he would rather continue his love and mercy unto us, and that his holy Spirit would daily proceed with the blessed work of Sanctification, and renewing of our souls unto Holiness and Righteousness.

So

So often as we be tempted too, let us remember, that if we yield unto it, we shall hinder the blessed work of God's Spirit, hinder our New Birth and Sanctification, and thereby do what lies in our power to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and cause him to leave off the happy work of Regeneration. *Use* 2.

When *David* intreateth the Lord that he would renew a constant and stable Spirit in him; he shews, that he was greatly affraid of his own weakness, and therefore desires strength from God to hold out and persevere in Obedience even unto the end: That God would by his Spirit give him a constant purpose and continual indeavour both in heart and life to do his Will; and therefore we learn from him to suspect our selves, to fear our own weakness and infirmity, if the Lord should leave us to our selves: *Blessed is the man that fears always; but he that hardneth his heart shall run into all evil ways.* For such is our weakness, that we are ready to fall into the self-same sin, from the which we are escaped, if the Lord do but a little *Use* 3. God to fear our weakness Prov. 18. 4.

leave us to our ſelves: This doth the Prophet teach, *Pſal.* 78. *How oft did they provoke him in the Wilderneſs, and grieve him in the Deſart?* Thus did *Pharaoh*, Exod. 9. 27. *I have ſinned, and the Lord is righteous, but I and my people are ſinfull.* But when the judgement was removed, his heart was hardned again, and he continued in his ſin: We ſee this in the example of the *Iſraelites*, *Jud.* 3. They commit evil again, and again, they fell into Idolatry, they knew it was a ſin, yea, and they had experience of God's ſeverity againſt it: For all that, they fell again into the ſame ſin, and ſo provoked the Lord to puniſh them. So, *Heb.* 6. *Many ſin again after the receiving and acknowledging of the Truth.* So that, except the Lord uphold and ſtay men back, they will fall into the ſame ſin they before committed, and ſo provoke the Lord afreſh to puniſh them.

Oh then let us fear our weakneſs; if *David*, a worthy Prophet, a man after God's heart, praveth thus, *That God would eſtabliſh him with his free Spirit*; that is, give him a conſtant purpoſe

poſe and endeavour to continue in Obedience, how much more have we need to do the ſame, knowing how weak we are, how many inticements we have to ſin, how cunning the Devil is, and uſeth the World and the Fleſh, as ſo many enemies to fight againſt us? Well, let us fear the worſt, and doubt our weakneſs, and it will make us more carefull to avoid ſin, and the occaſions of ſin; for ſeldome ſhall a man fall into that ſin which he doth truly fear to commit.

As we are to fear our own weakneſs, and infirmity, ſo we muſt intreat the Lord that he would never leave us to our ſelves, but that he would give us his ſtable and conſtant Spirit; or as *Paul* prays for, *That God would ſtrengthen us by his Spirit in the inner man*; that he might not onely begin well, but continue by conſtant perſeverance in Obedience all our days: For if the Lord leave us, alas, we ſhall eaſily fall flat to the ground. Even as a ſtaff in a man's hand, ſo long as it is ſtayed, it ſtands, but if it be left alone, it falls to the ground; ſo it is with

with us, and therefore let us not presume of our own strength or power, but suspect it, and pray to God to renew his constant and stable Spirit in us.

Use 5. Here is matter of great comfort to the Children of God, that fall of weakness and infirmity to the same offence after Repentance: And such is the depth of Sathan's temptations, that he tells them, that the Children of God fall not into the same sin again after their repentance; if they do, he then telleth them, that there is no place for a second Repentance: But this is false, for the promises of God are without limitation of times, or consideration of sins, or respect of persons: He will receive to his mercy all repentant sinners, whether their sins be committed before or after repentance, whether once or often; so that they renew their Repentance according as they have sinned anew. This pardon Christ himself publisheth, *Mat.* 11.28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you:* Yea, the Lord enjoyneth us sinfull men,

Lub.

Luk.17. To forgive our brother ſeventy times ſeven times, if he turn again, and ſay it repenteth me. So that we ſee, this is a marvellous comfort to all ſuch as groan under the burden of their ſins, that have fallen through infirmity into one ſin often: Let not ſuch be diſcouraged, but aſſure themſelves, that albeit with *Peter* they fall often, yet if with him they repent truly, and weep bitterly for their ſins, the Lord is mercifull to forgive them their ſins; not that we ſhould live proudly, preſumptuouſly, ſtubbornly, and obſtinately againſt him, but if we fall through failty: For *Pſal.* 103. *The Lord knoweth whereof we be made, he remembreth that we are but duſt.*

When *David* prayeth to be renewed, and to recover his former feeling and comfort: Hence we learn, that the Child of God is not always at one ſtay, but there is an entercourſe in the Faith of a Chriſtian man or woman; ſometimes full of comfort, joy, and peace in conſcience; and ſometimes again heavy and ſad, yea, full of ſorrow and perplexity: Even as a man

Doct.6. The child of God is not always at one ſtay.

man in an Ague, sometimes sick, and sometimes well; and as it is with Trees, sometimes Winter, and sometimes Summer: This is the estate of all God's children, as *David*, *Joseph*, *Hezechiah*, *Job*, *&c.* and continual experience proveth this, that the estate of all God's children ebbs and flows, hath its change: When as they walk directly and upright with God, then they have peace and comfort; but when they start aside, and commit some sin, then they find torments of conscience, and grief of mind.

Use 1. This shews us what is the estate and condition of the child of God in this Life: He is not here so sanctified, as that he feels no corruption of sin to hang about him; but rather such a one as feels the burthen of his corruptions, hindring him in this his course of Christianity, under which he sighs and groans, labouring by all good means to be disburdened. Indeed it is a matter of great comfort, to feel the graces of God's Spirit, as Faith, Love, &c. but no Child of God can always feel the

the comfort of grace, but, as fire that is raked up in the aſhes, it is hid from his feeling for a time, but at length it will break out again, to his great joy and comfort.

Uſe 2. Well, ſeeing this is the eſtate of God's children here, and ſometimes they find great peace and comfort, ſometimes great grief and ſorrow, let us not be too much diſcouraged, but rather, when as by our falls and ſlips we have weakned our comfort, let us intreat the Lord to renew our comfort again; let us do as a poor Traveller, if he miſs his way, and go out of it, he will haſten into it again, and trudge, and pluck up his heels to recover that he hath loſt: So let us when we have ſinned, and gone out of the way, make haſte to return; and as a man that hath been long ſick, being grown feeble and weak, will uſe all means to gather up his crums, and to recover his former ſtrength again: So let us when we have loſt ſome part of our comfort, and heavenly ſtrength: Let us (I ſay) uſe all bleſſed means, to recover our former health and comfort again:

again; let us pray much, read much, hear often and meditate much; let us bewail us of our former sloath, and make more upright steps in time to come to God's Kingdome.

Deut. 2. A purpose not to sin, the mark of a sanctified heart. Ps. 50.17. Mar. 6.2.

Note hence, That it is the special fruit and mark of a sanctified heart, and of the mind renewed, to have a *right Spirit*; that is, a purpose not to sin, but in all things to please God, and to do his Will, to walk with God in all his Commandements. Whereas on the contrary, when a man hath a purpose to live in any known sin, it is a fearfull and manifest sign of a naughty and wicked heart; for when the heart is truly sanctified, then will be wrought this right Spirit not to transgress in any thing; I do not say, that the man sanctified and regenerate doth not sin at all: but he hath no purpose to sin, no delight in sin, but beareth a constant purpose in all things to please God; when he can say with *David*, *I have refrained my feet from every evil way*: Again, *That is born of God, sinneth not*; that is, with all purpose of heart, with de-

Gen. 17. 1. Ps. 18.23. 1 Joh. 3 9 Gen. 39. 9.

light

light in ſin; and as they purpoſe, ſo they endeavour it, they are affraid, and ſuſpect themſelves, ſhun the occaſion of ſin, ſtrive againſt their corruptions, and Sathan's temptations.

This Doctrine doth evidently convince the greateſt number, to be ſuch as never had the true work of Sanctification wrought in them: Their hearts be not ſanctified, their minds be not renewed; Why? namely, becauſe they want this mark and fruit of a ſanctified heart: For though they hear of their ſins, be told of them, and the fearfull judgements of God denounced againſt them, yet they will not leave them, neither forſake them, but will continue in them; yea, though it coſt them the loſs of God's favour, and endangering their own ſouls. Let us not deceive our ſelves, let us try our hearts by this rule, whether they be ſanctified, or no: Doſt thou find a diſlike of all ſins, and an hatred of them? Haſt thou a conſtant, and reſolute purpoſe, by the grace of God, to walk before him all thy days? This is a ſign of *Uſe* 1.

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an upright heart, and that it is sanctified. And doſt thou find no ſuch reſolution, no ſuch purpoſe, but rather contrary, in a wilfull manner to run on in thy old ſins? thou wilt continue in them, let God and men ſay, and do what they can, in lying, ſtealing, drunkenneſs, whoredome, ignorance, contempt of the Word, &c. Say what thou wilt, confeſs what thou wilt, it is a clear caſe thy heart is naught, it is filthy, not ſanctified; for it is impoſſible that a man ſhould have true repentance, and a heart truly ſanctified, and yet have a purpoſe to live in his known ſins. And therefore it convinceth all ſuch as be impenitent, wilfull, and notorious hypocrites and ſinners; Yea, if they forſake many of their ſins, and yet purpoſe to live in one, it argueth the heart is not ſanctified: *Herod* left many, yet lived in covetouſneſs, and the like.

Mark. 6. Mat. 28.

This Doctrine may ſerve for the comfort of God's children, who are much grieved for their ſins and infirmities, when they fail and come ſhort of good duties, and ſometimes ſtart aſide.

aſide, as ſaith Saint *James*, *In many things we ſin all; and the juſt man falls ſeven times.* But if thou canſt truly ſay, it is againſt my purpoſe, I hate the ſin I commit, I condemn it, I had no purpoſe to do it, my deſire was to pleaſe God, then thou maiſt have comfort, thy heart is ſound, God will not condemn thee for it: *The Lord will ſpare his children as a Father his only Son.* A child is going to School, and his purpoſe is ſo to do, in the way he falls into ſome company, and ſtays there too long, and plays the Trevant, but it is againſt his purpoſe: Even ſo the child of God purpoſeth to ſerve God, and to pleaſe him in all things, having no purpoſe to ſin, but by ſome temptation of the Devil, or allurement of the World, is overtaken; *I do the evil I would not, I cannot do the good I would, but I delight in the Law of God concerning the inner man:* This is *Paul's* comfort, and this is the comfort of all God's children, if they can truly ſay, I do the evil I would not, I delight in the Law of God; that God will accept the will for the deed.

Re-

Renew, or refresh a new spirit in me.

AS if he should have said, O Lord, I have (by my sins) dimmed thy graces in me, yea, even quenched, and extinguished them, and almost put them clean out; but, Lord, I beseech thee, renew thy graces in me, *Refresh me:* Even as we see a Lamp, when all the Oyl is spent, it winks, and is almost extinguished, till it be renewed and refreshed with Oyl, then it burns again, and giveth light.

Doct. 8. Sin quenches grace as water doth fire.

Hence we learn, what is the cursed nature of sin, and the great power of it: Namely, it is a pail of water cast on the fire, which, if it do not quench and extinquish, and put all out, yet it allays the heat of it: Even so, the graces of God's spirit in his children, alas, they be but weak, and small; but sin is a pail of cold water, to quench the heat and comfort of them *David* was wont to delight in God's service, to be forward thereunto; but sin did so cool him, that he could have little joy in it now: *Demas* was forward a while, but the World choake[d]

choaked him ſo, that he left Chriſt; and Chriſt bids the Church of *Sardis* to be awake, and to ſtrengthen the things that are ready to dye in them: And the *Laodiceans* grew neither hot nor cold, by reaſon of their pride and carnal ſecurity. So is the Church of *Epheſus* reproved, for that ſhe had loſt her firſt love: So the Apoſtle St. *James* reſembleth and compareth ſin to Child-bearing for the fruitfulneſs of it: *Jam.* 1. 15. *Luſt, when it hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin, and ſin when it is finiſhed, it bringeth forth death.* 1 *Cor.* 5. 6. Likewiſe it is compared to Leaven, that leaveneth the whole lump, and therefore no marvel though it proceed by little and little, from one degree unto another. Rev. 3. 2. Rev. 2.

When we ſee ſome men who have been forward, and have taken delight in good things, now grow cold, and loſe their firſt love, it is a flat ſign that ſome ſin or other hath ſtolne upon them; they either fall in love with the World, delight, pleaſures, profits, preferments, or elſe ſecurity poſſeſſeth their ſoul, as pride, idleneſs, *Uſe* 1.

neſs, ſloath, ſelf-love, covetouſneſs, pleaſure, ſome ſin or other hath bewitched them; and therefore let all ſuch as find themſelves thus decaying in grace, faith, comfort, care and conſcience; let them ſuſpect themſelves, and think all is not well; let them ſearch the cauſe of their decay, and it is ſin, ſome ſin or other hath crept upon them.

Uſe 2. How ſhould this make us afraid of ſin, ſeeing it hath ſuch wofull effect? which is, to quench the comfort and graces of God's holy Spirit in us: It blinds our eyes, that we cannot ſee what is good and evil; it hardeneth the heart, that a man cannot relent and mourn for his ſins, and be moved with the Almighty's Judgements; it bringeth decay, and eclipſe of his graces: Men are affraid to do any thing that might hinder their health, or wealth, how much more the health and happineſs of their ſouls? Let us therefore always keep a diligent care over our ſouls; let us ſeek to cut off all occaſions to evil, and endeavour to ſtop the firſt beginning; for the more ſin

groweth

groweth unto an head, the more the Spirit of God is quenched, the work of grace is diminiſhed, and the aſſurance of our comfort is weakn'd and leſſen'd.

Uſe 3. When we find any decay in Faith, Love, Zeal, Knowledge, Repentance, Obedience, &c. Oh then let us labour to be renewed, to recover our former eſtate again. *Do the firſt works again, awake, and ſtrengthen the things ready to dye.* For even as a ſparkle of fire in aſhes blown up; ſo muſt we uſe all means whereby we may have the work of grace renewed in us.

Rev. 1. 1. 2 Tim. 1. 5.

The means for encreaſing of grace.

1. We muſt attend upon the Word of God preached; for as that is the means to beget Faith, ſo it is to encreaſe it, and renew it.

2. We muſt read and meditate much, call our minds to accompt, and be ſorry for our decays, and labour to repair them, even as a Ship when it leaks, or a City when the Walls be battered.

3. We muſt (ſaith *David*) pray often and earneſtly unto God, to renew a right Spirit in us, and a godly Spirit, that may be always bent to the glory of

of God, and our own Salvation.

The ſpirit of Adultery may dwell in us, as in *David*; the ſpirit of uncleanneſs, and inceſt, may have poſſeſſion of us, as in *Lot*; the ſpirit of denial of our Maſter, may have place in us, as in *Peter*; the ſpirit of cruelty and perſecution may rage in us as in *Paul*; but not to have ſo much rule and predominance in us, as to keep out the grace of God: For we may plainly ſee, that as ſoon as God had given them the right ſpirit of diſcerning, and the true ſpirit of knowledge of their ſins, they repented preſently, and became children of obedience, and worthy inſtruments of God's glory. True it is, man may fall, and ſin through weakneſs, and frailty of his own corrupt nature, and yet recover again by God's ſpecial favour and grace: But if he recover again, and then fall to ſinning a new, it cannot be leſs than preſumption; for the man which is twice a ſinner, and but once a penitent, we may ſay hath ſin as red as Scarlet, and yet by true repentance and amendment of his life

may be made as white as snow. O my beloved, when God shall bring us to the pit, or brink of Death; O then shall we easily see, that sin, and the pleasure which we have taken in following and delighting in it, shall then prove a heavy burthen to us, which will so load our poor consciences, that we shall be ready to sink under the weight of it, if God's mercy be not shown in our weakness. Will any man drink poyson, because he will try an Antidote? commit sin, and then presume of God's mercies? God forbid! But let us so lead our lives here on earth, that we may in the end of our days, enjoy Heaven for our reward: There is the blessed Consummation of all them who love the Lord Jesus.

VERSE XI.

Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

David in the former Verse had put up sundry Requests and Petitions to

God for grace and mercy for the pardon of his ſins.

The diviſion of the words.

Now this eleventh Verſe containeth in it an earneſt Deprecation, wherein the Prophet intreateth the Lord to turn from him two fearfull judgements, and grievous puniſhments, which he had deſerved for his ſins. Firſt, what greater miſery can befall the child of God, than to be caſt out of God's preſence, love, and favour? Secondly, what greater plague to a diſtreſſed ſoul, than to be deprived of God's bleſſed Spirit, whereby alone we are guided and comforted, and without whom we can have no comfort, nor ever do any good thing, but ſhall be carried of our own luſts head-long into all ſin and wickedneſs?

David alludeth to the judgement of God upon *Saul*.

Now againſt both theſe *David* prayeth unto the Lord in this Verſe, and herein he alludeth to the judgement of God upon *Saul*, who was his next Predeceſſor and King over *Iſrael*, whom the Lord caſt off, and did utterly reject from being King over the people, becauſe he did reject the Lord,

Lord, and caſt off the Commandement of God, and would not obey his voice: And therefore the Lord took his Spirit from *Saul*, and gave him an evil ſpirit to vex and torment him. And both theſe *David* here prayeth againſt; that Almighty God would ſhew him mercy, and not deal with him as he did with *Saul*, though he had tranſgreſſed and offended grieouſly, yet that he would rather humble him by ſome other means, and not in his juſt judgement to caſt him off, and reject him, nor take his holy Spirit from him. And as God doth bring coals to make his wrath hot, ſo muſt man bring tears with Repentance. *David* knew, that from God all puniſhment did come; and our perdition is from our ſelves, and by us all ſin is committed; and therefore he deſires the Lord not to caſt him away: Which is my next part to handle. 1 Sam. 11 16.

Caſt me not away.

AS if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord, howſoever I have ſinned grievouſly, yet I pray thee deal not

with me as thou didst deal with *Saul*, that wicked man, to cast me off and reject me for being King and Ruler of thy people: Nor take thy holy Spirit from me, whereby I am enabled to do thy will.

By the presence and face of God, is meant the love and favour of God; and therefore *David* intreateth the Lord, that he would not thrust him clean out of favour, and deprive him of his love. Therefore let every man and women never defer their repentance, but crave pardon for their offences with *David*, saying, *O Lord, I have sinned against thee*; casting thy self down at his mercy Seat, like the Prodigal Son, like another *Mary Magdalen*, like penitent *Peter*, desiring the Lord to have pity and mercy on thy sinfull soul, not to cast it for ever from his presence; but rather chastise thee as a Son, but not to disinherit thee, and cast thee out for a reprobate.

Doct. 1. The pleasures of sin are dear bought.

Hence we learn, that it is a wonderfull and fearful judgement for a man or woman to be cast out of the Lord's favour, from his presence, so as

so as he shall shew no favour unto us, but his dis-favour and wrathfull countenance, it is a very heavy and dolefull case. It is said of *Cain*, that God cast him out of his presence, and that was the heighth of *Cain's* misery. So the Lord cast off *Saul* from being King over *Israel*. As the favour of God is Life; so his dis-favour is Death and Hell: And as in the presence of God is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore; so in the want of his presence, there is nothing but woe and misery, yea, it is a step to eternall Death: Neither is there any misery which the child of God doth fear more than this, to be forsaken of the Lord Almighty, and to be cast out of his favour. Gen. 4.

Seeing that is so great and fearfull a judgement to be cast out of the Lord's favour, and gracious presence, Oh what mad men be they, that make so light of God's love and favour, that will, for the gaining of a peny or two, or the enjoying of an hours pleasure, lose the love and favour of the Lord Almighty, and for *Use* 1. Their madness discovered, that make light of God's favour. Mar. 16. 26.

ever deprive themſelves of his glorious preſence, and plunge both body and ſoul into everlaſting woe and miſery, with the Devil and his Angels.

Uſe 2. Seeing the enjoying of God's preſence is ſo happy and comfortable, and to be deprived of it, is ſo grievous and terrible, how ſhould we uſe all means to get into his favour, if we want it, and keep it, if we have it? *In thy preſence is the fulneſs of joy, and in thy Light we ſhall ſee light.* And becauſe ſin thrutts men out of God's preſence, and ſeparates between God and man, above all things take heed of ſin, avoid it, and ſhun it, as the bane of our ſouls.

For the better opening and underſtanding of this Verſe, we muſt diſcuſs two great and weighty queſtions, which being well conſidered, will make much for the clearing of this Text.

Two objections. The former is this, when *David* intreats the Lord, *Not to caſt him out of his preſence*, that is, his love and favour; whether a man elected, and in the favour of God, as *David*, juſtified and ſanctified, may loſe the love of God, and

and fall away, to become a reprobate and caſt-away, and ſo finally to periſh?

The other queſtion is, ſeeing *David* prayeth the Lord, *Not to take his holy Spirit from him*, whether the ſanctified gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit, may finally and totally be extinguiſhed and taken away? Theſe queſtions both be defended and affirmed by the Papiſts and their followers, who hold, that a man truly elected, called, juſtified, and ſanctified, and in the favour of God, may fall away and periſh. We hold the contrary, that a man once in the favour of God, elect, called, juſtified, and ſanctified, cannot finally periſh, nor clean be bereft of the ſaving graces of the Holy Spirit.

Now becauſe theſe two queſtions be points of great moment, and on which all our happineſs and comfort doth hang, and only depend, therefore I will ſtand a little to prove them by the Teſtimonies of Scripture, with Reaſons and Arguments drawn from the written word of God, and remove ſome certain Objection of the Papiſts againſt the certainty of our

perſeverance in Faith to the end.

First, that place of *Jeremy*, where the Lord comforts his Elect, and choſen people, is moſt pregnant for this purpoſe: *Yea*, (ſaith the Lord) *with an everlaſting love have I loved thee, and therefore in mercy have I drawn thee*: So that it is manifeſt hence, whom God loves once in Chriſt, he loves for ever; and there is no time when he can be ſaid not to love them: *For as much as he loved his own, that were in the World; unto the end he loved them*: Where our Saviour Chriſt, to comfort his Diſciples, tells them, that God the Father loved them that be Members of Jeſus Chriſt, even unto the end, and his love ſhall never fail them. *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* Now then, unleſs a man will ſay, that God doth repent of his calling, and electing men to eternal Life, it muſt needs follow, that they cannot periſh whom God calls, and means to ſave: And our Saviour Chriſt ſaith plainly, that it is impoſſible, that any man Elected ſhould periſh. False Chriſts ſhould deceive

Jer. 31. 3.

Joh. 13. 1.

Rom. 11.

Mat. 24. 24.

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the very *Elect if it were possible*, but that is impossible: And the gates of Hell, that is, all the power and malice of the Devil shall not prevail against the least of God's children to hinder their everlasting Salvation. Ro. 8.30.

Again, this is proved, *Mat.* 16.16. where Christ promiseth *Peter*, and in him the whole Church, *That the gates of Hell should never prevail against him*: Where Christ shews, that indeed the Devil, through his Temptations, might shew very much strength, but they should then comfort themselves in this, that they should never prevail, or finally get the Victory. Again, *Mat.* 24. *They shall deceive (even if it were possible) the very Elect.* Out of which words of our Saviour, we may gather, that the Elect of God shall not be seduced, and so fall away finally. Again, *Joh.* 10.28. Christ saith, *His sheep shall never perish*, adding his withall, *No man shall take them out of my hands.* And again, *Rom.* 8.30. *Whom he predestinateth, he calleth, justifieth, sanctifieth, and glorifieth*: Therefore not fall away finally:

for he that falleth away finally, ſhall (aſſuredly) never be glorified.

But admit, (as the Papiſts would have it) that a man might fall away finally, then he muſt be clean cut off from Chriſt, and have no conjunction with him before he fall away finally: Then at the ſecond re-uniting he muſt be Baptized, for Baptiſm is the Sacrament of inciſion, or of graffing into Chriſt: But that is abſurd, that Baptiſm ſhould be any more than once adminiſtred; therefore a man is but once united, or once ingraffed, and cannot be re-united, and never fall. And therefore frivolous is that diſtinction of Venial and Mortal ſins with Papiſts: For if any ſin of the Elect ſhould be mortal, then there muſt needs be a ſecond renewing of the Elect unto Chriſt; which is moſt abſurd to think, for the Lord worketh this but once: And *David*, though at this time he lay languiſhing under the heat of the Lord's wrath, for thoſe horrible ſins of his, Adultery and Murther; yet in this Verſe he prays not to have it taken from

All men muſt put a difference betwixt that they feel, and that they have not felt.

from him, which doth argue that he had a touch of it, even at this time of greateſt extremity and miſery, though he felt it not with the ſame meaſure of comfort he had done many times before.

Secondly, beſides all theſe plain Teſtimonies of Scripture, let us conſider a word or two to prove, that in regard of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, the Elect cannot periſh, and finally fall away.

Firſt, if a man elected of God to eternal Life, called, juſtified, and ſanctified, may fall away, and finally periſh, then it is either becauſe God wants love, or power to ſave him, but to ſay that God is unwilling, or unable, is meer blaſphemy: Therefore all thoſe which he Elects muſt needs be ſaved, ſeeing God doth both will it, and ſhew that he is able to effect it; firſt, if God be willing, and would ſave them, *Who hath reſiſted his Will? If God be with us, who can be againſt us?* but that he is moſt willing and able to ſave the Elect, it is manifeſt: For his Will, *God ſo loved them, that he ſent his Son to die*

Rom. 11. Rom. 8.

Joh. 3. 16.

dye for them. Now this is a great tryal and proof of his love and willingneſs, that he had rather ſee his onely begotten Son, that was near and dear unto him, to be hanged on the Tree, to dye the curſed death on the Croſs, to ſhed his precious blood, and to bear the curſe of God, and helliſh Torments, than to ſee any one of the Elect periſh: *And this is the Father's will that hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing, but raiſe it up at the laſt day.* Joh 6 30.

Secondly, for his power, that he is able to ſave all thoſe whom he will ſave, it is manifeſt; God is Omnipotent, and moſt righteous, and mighty to ſave, and the Lord doth what he will, *None can take them out of my Father's hands, who is greater than all.* And therefore, ſeeing God is willing, and deſires that all the Elect ſhould be ſaved, and not only Decreed it, but ſent his Son to ſave them. Eay 63. John 10. 27, 28.

Secondly, thoſe for whom Chriſt dyed, and prayed that their faith might not fail, they muſt needs be ſaved, and their faith cannot fail; but he hath

prayed

prayed for all true believers: *Father, keep them that thou hast given me, that they may be one in me, as thou art one in me.* Now then, if Christ's prayer be of force, and can prevail, and do any thing with the Father, (as he confesseth) that the Father hath, doth, and will hear him in all things, then certainly no true believer can perish, and finally fall away. Luk. 2. 32. John 17.

Thirdly, no true Member of Christ can perish; for then Christ's body should be imperfect; but every true believer is a living member of Christ's body, and therefore cannot perish; yea, it is as impossible that Christ himself should perish, as any true believer, that is truly ingrafted into his body, by faith and the spirit.

Fourthly, in regard of God the Holy Ghost, who is the pledge and pawn of our Adoption and Salvation, the Seal of our Election, and doth testifie God's love in Christ for our Salvation. Now then, unless we will say, that the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Wisdome, being of the very counsel of God, and the Spirit of truth Ro. 8. 16.

ther

that cannot lye, that he testifies untruths, that the believer that repents, and believes in Christ Jesus shall be saved, and yet he shall not, which is Blasphemy, we must needs confess it is impossible: *He that is born of God cannot sin*, (with full consent to Death) *because the seed of the Spirit remaineth in him.* And therefore I conclude, That the child of God, Elected, Called, Justified, and Sanctified, cannot perish, and for ever fall away; cannot become a Reprobate, and Limb of the Devil, but shall continue to the end, and God will finish the good work of grace in him till the coming of his Son Christ Jesus.

1 Joh. 3. 9

Use 1. Papists Doctrine against the nature of Faith.

This confutes that damnable Doctrine of the Papists, who hold all in uncertainty, yea, they teach, and hold, that a man truly Elected, may become a Reprobate, though to day a child of God, and highly in his favour, yet to morrow by thy sins thou mayst become a Limb of the Devil, out of God's favour, in his displeasure damned for ever; though to day a Member of Christ Jesus, called, justified,

ſtified, and ſanctified, yet to morrow loſe all, and be damned for ever, which indeed is the break-neck of all hope and comfort, if a man know not whether he ſhall be ſaved or not.

A marvellous comfort to God's children, if thou diddeſt ever find the true work of Grace in thy heart, true faith, repentance, and newneſs of Life; aſſure thy ſelf it cannot ever be loſt, God will finiſh that he begins; yea, the eſtate of God's children now, is better than the eſtate of *Adam* in Paradiſe before his fall; for then *Adam* ſtood by his own power, therefore might, and did fall: *But we be kept by the power of God unto eternal Life.* Secondly, the eſtate of *Adam* was mutable, by reaſon he had freedom of will, to ſtand or fall; but the eſtate of God's Elect is certain, and ſure, in regard of God's eternal decree in Chriſt, his death and paſſion, and the bond of the Spirit which cannot be broken.

Uſe 2. Comfort unto God's children, that grace cannot be loſt.

1 Pet. 1 5. Gal. 2. 2.

But there be three Objections againſt this Doctrine: That faith can never be loſt, or an Elect child of God become a Reprobate. Firſt, that God

Three objections.

God is said to be angry with his Children, and shew them his dis-favour: Secondly, that they by their sins may cut themselves off from God's favour, and so lose eternal Life, and be damned: And thirdly, other testimonies of Scripture, which may seem to prove the same.

Esa. 64. 5. For the former, *Behold, thou art angry, for we have sinned against thee*: so that it seemeth, that a man in the favour of God to day, may fall out of it, and procure his dis-favour, anger, and displeasure.

Ans. First, that God is not angry, to speak properly, with his children, but seemeth so to be by correcting and punishing them by judgements, and afflictions; so as a child thinks his Father is angry, because he corrects him: So do God's children; and indeed such affections do not agree to God's nature, to be like an earthly man's.

Secondly, I answer, that this anger of God is not an effect of his displeasure, or disfavour, but rather his love: And he corrects his children, not to de-

destroy them, but to convert them, that he may save them; as a Father his Son, whom he loves dearly.

Obj. 2. Where it is said, that God's children may by their sins break off God's love, yea, thrust themselves out of favour, and be for ever damned. 2. Rom. 8.

I *Answer*, it is false; for they be kept from damnable sins, and God lets their sins turn to their good, for God doth ever give them hearts to repent: The sins of the godly in themselves, deserve the everlasting curse of God, and eternal Death; If so that Jesus Christ had not by his death and bloodshedding satisfied his Father's anger for them.

Object. 3. *David* prays that God would blot them out of the Book of Life; therefore it seems a man Elected may perish, and be damned, for that Book is meant God's Counsel. 3. Psal. 69. 83.

I *Ans.* That *David* doth not read that ever the wicked had their names written indeed in the Book of Life, or were Elected indeed; but only because they lived in this Church, were taken for Christians, and esteemed as writ-

written in the Book of Life, and therefore he prays the Lord to blot them out: That is, to make it known that they were never written in it.

Well then, certain it is, that no one Elect Child of God can perish, or be damned, but shall come to Life eternal and be saved, because the Counsel of God standeth sure, and cannot be altered.

Instruct. Seeing this is so, that none that is the elect Child of God can perish, what a sweet comfort is this to all the children of God? For if ever thou didst repent, and feltest the love of God truly in thy soul, and art justified, and sanctified, thou needst not fear, for surely thou shalt be saved. And this must be a sure stay to uphold our poor souls in all dangers and temptations. We are as strange Mariners on the Sea; there be great Storms and Tempests, great Rocks, and Sands. The Sea is the World, the Ship is the Church, Heaven the Haven; the Devil raiseth up many boysterous Storms and Tempests, to sink our poor souls into Desperation:

tion: Now then by Faith we cast Anchor upon the Foundation of God's Election, which cannot be removed.

But in this place, by *Favour*, *Face*, and *Countenance of God*, is meant that Favour and mercy of God, whereby God gave *David* the Kingdome in the stead of *Saul*, advancing him to be King of *Israel*, and God's Lieutenant on Earth, that God would defend him, and keep him, to govern his people *Israel*.

Doct. 2. The godly fear, when they remember God's judgements on others.

Whereas *David* observed God's dealing with *Saul*, a wicked King, and how God plagued and punished *Saul* for his disobedience against the Word of God, and thereby is warned to take heed of the same Judgements of God, least they fall upon him: We learn, that it is the duty of every man and woman, to observe and mark God's dealings with others, and his just judgements upon ungodly sinners, that thereby we may learn to fear the like Judgements on our selves; and it is a great point of wisdom to learn to be wise by other men's harms:

harms; and for this end the Lord doth plague wicked and ungodly men, that his children might learn to amend. Even as we see notorious Malefactors are hanged on a Gibbet, that others seeing their shamefull end might beware. The Lord having punished sundry Nations about his people, saith, *He thought they would have learned to fear God by their example.* Zep. 3. 19

Use. Well, seeing this is that God looks for at our hands, and which he aimeth in punishing wicked men, namely that we should be warned by it, and take heed of their sins: Let us be wise, and observe God's judgements upon wicked men, and when we see a wicked man punished, a murderer, a conteenner, a blasphemer, a whoremonger, or the like; then let us fear, if we live in the same sins, we pluck not down the same judgements upon us: And as *David* here calls to mind *Saul*, how he for his rebellion and disobedience was cast off from God; so let us call to mind the spectacle of God's judgements on wicked men, and take heed of their sins, least we taste of their

their plagues and punishments.

We learn, that for sin the Lord doth deprive his children of his Favour, and as it were cast them out of his presence for a time: Thus we shall see, God hath spoiled men of great Riches and Honour for their sins, and brought them to extreme shame and misery: Look on *Eli*, and his two Sons; look on *Saul*, that wicked King; look on that persecuting Tyrant *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Haman*, *Achitophel*, *&c.*

Doct. 3. Sin takes away the feeling of God's favour for a time. 1 Sam. 15 1 Sam. 3 Dan. 4. 26 Ester 3.

This should admonish all men to take heed of sin, and rebellion against God; for certainly the Lord will abase all such as be proud against him, he will cast them out of his presence, make their names to rot and stink in the sight of men: *Those that honor me I will honour, but those that dishonour me, I will dishonour them*: and therefore if you would not be dishonoured in this world, and provoke the Lord to cast you out of his presence, and favour: Oh then beware how you sin and rebel against God; for if thou be as dear to God as *Eli*, which was God's High Priest, yet he will bring shame upon thy head. This

Use 1. 1 Sam. 2. 3.

Use 2. Folly of worldlings described.

This shews the madness of those men and women, who desiring to enjoy the honours, riches, and dignities, profits and preferments, they take a most prepostrous and very wrong course; for how do men seek for preferment, honour, and promotion, lands and livings? namely, by oppression, bribery, usury, extortion, and the like. Now alas we see, that it is a vain course, and the next way to strip a man naked of all these thing, and to bring him to shame and reproach, misery and poverty; for sin brings all these things upon them.

But if you would come to honour and dignity, riches and preferment, then seek to keep the favour of God, serve him, worship him, honour him, and he will honour them that do so: and if thou seekest these things by wicked and unlawfull means, certainly the Lord will cast dung in thy face.

2ly. When *David* prays, *That God would not take his holy Spirit from him*, he means not the Essence of the three Persons, but his gifts and graces, the virtue of God's Spirit sanctifying

fying his heart, and renewing of him. So then, if we understand these words, we must understand this Objection.

Quest. Whether that the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit wrought in the hearts of God's children, can be totally and finally lost, as *David*'s words seem to imply.

For the clear answer of this question, we must know, that the gifts of the Spirit be either temporary, for this Life, or else spiritual, for the Life to come: Now of the former there is no question, but the temporary gifts of the Spirit may be lost utterly.

Graces of God double.

Again, the Spiritual gifts and virtues of the Spirit be of two sorts; some common to the Elect and Reprobate, some proper and peculiar to God's elect and chosen children. Now concerning the gifts of God's Spirit, which be common to the wicked as well as the godly, to hear the word, to preach the word, and to do such like things, they may be lost.

Thirdly, the gifts of God's Spirit we such as are either essential to Faith, and without which faith cannot

not be, or else the effects and fruit of Faith, which are not of the essence of Faith. Such gifts of the Spirit as be not of the essence of Faith or absolutely necessary to eternal Life: The Lord doth sometimes take away for a time; as namely, the purity of a good Conscience, that inward peace which doth accompany it, the sense and feeling of God's love in Christ, and his special favour, cheerfulness of Spirit in praying, hearing, and such holy Duties; joy in the Holy Ghost, patience, the gift of prayer, and such like, because the love of God, and the salvation of the faithfull may stand without these for a time.

But to speak of the saving graces of God's sanctified spirit, as faith in God's promises, hope of Eternal life, affiance of God's mercy, through Jesus Christ, love of God, his Word, and Children, these graces can never be lost wholly: True it is, they may be lessened, and sometimes seem to be lost for the time; but yet certain it is, they cannot be wholly and final-

ly loſt; they may be as the Sun under a clowd, and as fire raked up in the aſhes, or as the Trees in Winter; but they cannot be extinguiſhed, loſt, and taken clean away; but juſt as the Sun ſhines clear, the clowds being ſcattered, and the fire gives light and heat being ſtirred: ſo faith, hope, affiance, joy, comfort, peice of conſcience, and the feeling of Gods love are renewed, and ſhew themſelve clear again.

Vſe 1. Comfort to the godly that cannot be loſt.

Seeing that the knowledge and ſaving graces of Gods holy and ſanctified Spirit cannot totally and finally be loſt, this is matter of endleſs comfort to every true child of God in the time of temptation and grievous triall; for if ever thou foundeſt and felteſt in thy heart true faith in Chriſt Jeſus, ſound repentance, hope of eternall life, love of God; howſoever theſe may be much weakned, and for a time in thy ſenſe and feeling, ſeem to be loſt, yet they can never be taken away; yea, if thou doſt carefully attend the means, as namely, the ſincere preaching of the Word,

administration of the Sacraments, continual humble, and earnest prayer, the Lord will revive them, and renew them again.

Use 2. This must serve to instruct and direct us how to judge of them, who fall sometimes into pangs of despair, uttering words of desperation, that they are damned Persons and Reprobates, and cry out thus of themselves: Truly, if ever we saw in them the sound work of Grace, and true Repentance, delight in the Word, care to lead a godly Life, love to God's children, &c. we are, in Charity, to hope the best of them, to think that they belong to God, and that they speak they know not what of themselves; for they speak according to their present sense and feeling: When as indeed in time of temptation, and trouble of mind, they be like a man that is grievous sick, he can relish no meat, every thing seems bitter unto him, because his mouth is out of temper; but when he comes to health, he judgeth otherwise: Even so

so these poor distressed souls, in their trouble and affliction they speak they know not what; not as their estate is in truth, but as they think it to be, according to their present sense and feeling.

Hence we see, what to answer to that Objection: That many men, who have made a fair profession of the truth, had excellent gifts, and yet have clean fain away. So *Heb.6. Such as be enlightned, tasted of the Heavenly gifts, were partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted of the Word of God, and of the powers of the World to come*; such men notwithstanding may fall away, and that finally. *Use* 3. Heb. 6.

I answer, That there is nothing spoken there of the true Work of Grace and Sanctification, of saving Faith, sound Repentance, hearty Obedience, and a new Life, but onely of such common gifts as may befall a Reprobate; and therefore Saint *John* shews the cause why they fell away: Namely, they were never true and lively members of the Church, or of Jesus Christ; never truly ingraffed

into his Myſtical Body; they had knowledge, and were enlightned, taſted of the heavenly gifts and graces of God's Spirit, and had ſome glimmering of the joys of the life to come, which the child of God enjoys; but the ſound work of grace, a renewed heart, faith, repentance, obedience, and a ſanctified life, was ever wanting, they were but hypocrites.

1 Joh. 2. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.*

And therefore it behoves us all to take heed that we content not our ſelves with the common gifts and mercies of the holy Ghoſt, which a reprobate may have: for it is certain, that excellent gifts will not avail a man to ſalvation, unleſs there be the true work of grace, ſaving Faith, ſound Repentance, and hearty Obedience.

Mat. 7. 21.

VERSE

VERSE 12 and 13.

Restore me to the joy of thy salvation, and stablish me with thy free Spirit. Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and the sinners shall be converted unto thee.

IN these words are contained an earnest Prayer of *David* unto God, for the renewing of God's mercy, and feeling of his love again, in the 12 verse. In the 13 verse he uses a reason to move the Lord thereunto, namely, that if the Lord shall receive him into favour again, and testifie his love unto him in the pardon of his sins, then he will not be unmindful of God's dealing with him, but become a preacher and proclaimer of God's mercy unto others, to draw them to God, in shewing what God hath done for his soul, and so that by the example of God's mercy to him, others should be wone. Parts of the verse.

In the 12 verse he makes a twofold petition unto God: First, for the former feeling of an assurance of

God's love and mercy for the pardon of his ſins. Secondly, that God would uphold him with his free Spirit, ſo as now being delivered out of the curſed thraldom and ſlavery of ſin, he might cheerfully and freely ſerve the Lord, and run the way of his Commandements.

Reſtore me to the joys of thy Salvation.

No joy can comfort man's ſoul, but the joy of God's ſalvation.

AS if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord my God, I acknowledge and confeſs, that all the while I ſerved thee, and lived in thy fear, led a holy and godly Life, and kept an upright heart, that I found wonderfull and exceeding joy in the aſſurance of thy love, and mercy in Chriſt for my Salvation; but ſince I rebelled againſt thee, and wilfully break thy holy Commandements, I have deprived my ſoul of that heavenly comfort and conſolation, and felt terrors and grief, fears and cares, and exceeding vexation: Now merciſull God, I humbly intreat thee to reſtore me again to thy joy and comfort, to aſſure me of thy love and favour, that thou

thou art graciously reconciled unto me, that I may receive my former comfort; and not onely that, but because I see how weak I am, and have no power to stand without thy help and grace, I humbly intreat thee to stay and strengthen me, to establish thy grace in me, and so to uphold me in thy obedience, that I may freely and heartily obey thee all my days.

Doct. 1. Fruit of sin described. *Note.*

The child of God truly called, justified, and sanctified by God's Spirit, if he once fall against God, and provoke him to anger by his wilfull disobedience, doth feel exceeding anguish and sorrow of heart, great grief and trouble of mind, fears and cares, lest the Lord should reject him; so that there is a Hell in his poor soul and wounded Conscience, till he be again reconciled to God by Faith and Repentance. So long as *David* walked with God in uprightness of heart, he had exceeding great joy and comfort in the Lord his God, was assured of his love for pardon of his sins, and eternal salvation; but when he fell to Adultery,

and Murther, and so rebelled against God, it is wonderful to see into what a gulph of misery he plung'd himself, what fears and cares, what doubts and troubles did vex his soul, and wound his conscience. Even so it is with all the godly, while they have a care to fear their God, serve and please him, and keep an upright heart before the Lord, lead a godly and Christian life, they feel and find in themselves exceeding joy, and wonderful comfort, with assurance of God's love in Christ for their salvation. But if at any time they break out to sin, and rebel against God by wilful disobedience, then they shall find an hell in their consciences, troubles, tears and cares for the time. Who can tell what fears and
Luke 23. cares *Peter* felt? in what grief and sorrow of heart he was in, when cowardly he denied his Lord and Master? it cost him many a bitter tear. The reason of this doctrin is, because all peace and comfort to a poor soul springs from the sense and comfortable feeling of God's love in Christ Jesus

Jesus for the pardon of sin and eternal salvation; and therefore when that is lost, alas! what peace or comfort can they have? Secondly, they do by such wilful sin and disobedience grieve the Spirit, and make the holy Ghost sad with them, and so do what they can to expel the Spirit of God in them. Now where the Spirit of God is made sad and grieved, how can there be any true joy?

Seeing there is such sweet comfort in a godly and christian life, while we walk with God, and serve and please him in spirit and truth; and when men sin and rebel against their God, they pull down upon their heads such woful miseries, troubles and cares. How should this make every man exceeding careful of sin, which brings such woful miseries and judgments unto our souls, such torments, fears and cares. *Use 2.*

To the joy of thy salvation.

AS if he should have said, O Lord my God, when thou didst assure me again of thy love and

favour for the pardon of my ſins, and eternal ſalvation, I had exceeding joy therein: Now I do humbly intreat thee to reſtore it to me again.

Doct. 1. Favour of God is a chriſtians chief. ſt joy.

Hence mark, what is the thing the children of God do moſt deſire, and crave at God's hand, and wherein they do moſt rejoyce; namely, the favour of God, and aſſurance of his love, in and through Chriſt Jeſus, that they know that God is graciouſly reconciled unto them, that they be in his favour, and ſhall never periſh, but ſhall everlaſtingly be ſaved. *David* was a King, and wanted no temporal commodity, pleaſure, or delight whatſoever, wherein worldly men rejoyce, but he conceived no kind of joy at all in theſe things, to be out of God's favour: And therefore prays unto God for the feeling of the true joy, and that is, of *His Salvation*, and that will miniſter unto him matter of true rejoycing indeed. Alas! moſt men being carnal, deſire riches, honour, pleaſure: *But, Lord, let me ſee thy loving countenance, thy favour and grace*; and that ſhall do me more good

Pſ. 4. 6, 7.

and

and comfort than all the things in the World. The poor Publican begs for this: *Lord be mercifull to me a sinner.* So *Paul* professeth of himself, that he esteemed of all things but as dung in comparison of Christ Jesus, and the favour of God in him: And the reason is plain, because if a man had all the World, and wanted the love and favour of God, and was in his displeasure, and under the curse of God, what good could it do him? Even as if a Subject should have ten thousand pounds, and yet the King cannot abide or endure him, but seeks his death. And therefore the Child of God, if he were asked, what is the thing he most desires in all the World, would answer, Mercy, and the love of God in Jesus Christ: He would despise Honour, Lands, Livings, Gold, Silver, Pleasures, and Delights, and prefer one dram or scruple of mercy, and the least drop of Christ's blood for Salvation, before all the World.

Luk. 8. Phil. 2 8.

Mat. 23. 26.

Psal. 23. 1, 2.

This may serve to reprove thousands in the World; carnal men and

Use 1.

women, ſo they have the world at will, and may live at eaſe, eat, drink and be merry; they feel no want of God's mercy, no need of Chriſt's bloud, they eſteem not God's favour and love, deſire not reconciliation, but ſay, *Who will ſhew us any good?* Well, didſt thou never feel the want of God's kindneſs and mercy? no hungring and thirſting after Jeſus Chriſt and his righteouſneſs? It is openly manifeſt thou doſt not belong to God, thou waſt never yet truly humbled.

Let this Doctrin admoniſh us all to labour with our hearts to be affected with this, namely, to eſteem more of God's love and favour, and aſſurance of his mercy, then all the world; let us deſire it more, let us rejoyce more in it: ſo as if the queſtion ſhould be asked, What is the chiefeſt thing that thou doſt moſt deſire and affect, and what thou doſt moſt delight and rejoyce in, of all the things in the world, we may be able in truth to anſwer, and ſay with feeling and comfort, I deſire nothing more

under

under heaven then the mercy and love of God in Christ Jesus, to be in his favour, to be reconciled unto hi Majesty, and, with *Paul*, to esteem all things but dung in comparison of that. And till this be found in us in some measure, we can never find true comfort to our souls, and be assured that we have true saving faith in Christ. For this is a certain sigh and note of an humble and believing heart, to hunger and thirst after God's mercy in Christ, and to esteem more highly of the least drop of Christ his precious bloud for our salvation, then of the whole world, if it were offered unto us.

Use 2. We must labour to manifest this our earnest desire and great accompt of God's mercy, by using all blessed means to attain unto it: we must repent and bewail our sins, leave and forsake them: we must embrace Jesus Christ by faith, and cry with tears unto God for mercy, *Knock*, *seek*, *ask*; and let us do as the men of *Tyrus* and *Sidon*, when *Herod* took a grudge against them, and intended to make war upon them, they came

Mat. 7.7. Act. 13. 10.

all with one accord, and beſought *Blaſtus* the King's Chamberlain to have peace. So let us go unto Jeſus Chriſt, the true Peace-maker, deſire him to ſpeak to God the Father for us, ſo that there may be an everlaſting peace.

Doct. 3. The ſtate of God's children is not always alike.

When *David* prayeth, that God would reſtore unto him *The joy of his Salvation*, and thoſe ſweet comforts he was wont to feel and find in God's mercy, and feeling of his tender love in Chriſt: We learn, that the eſtate of God's Children is not always alike, full of joy, and comfort, and gladneſs; but ſometimes full of grief, and miſery, and cares and troubles: For the deareſt children of God, who are repleniſhed with the greateſt meaſure of joy and comfort in the feeling and aſſurance of God's love in Chriſt, when as the Lord leaves them to fall into ſome ſin againſt Knowledge and Conſcience, they ſhall find not onely a great decay, but an utter loſs o joy and comfort for a time. Thus it was with *David*, who, though he

was

was a man after God's own heart, enriched with great blessings, and spiritual mercies, most dearly beloved of God, sanctified in great measure, yet now having fallen into these two filthy sins of adultery, and murther, see how he is perplexed in great distress, and trouble of mind; and how the feeling of God's mercy, and joy in God's Spirit seemed to be clean lost. So it was with *Peter*, and so it is in every child of God. Didst thou ever sin against knowledge and conscience since thou wast converted, thou shalt find then a wonderfull deadness of heart, trouble and vexation of mind, and feeling of God's anger, with the loss of comfort for a time. Luk. 23.

Seeing sins against Knowledge and Conscience, wound the soul exceedingly, and also deprive us of the peace and comfort, and joy of God's Spirit, and bring terrors, fears, and gripings with them: Let us avoid all sin, so especially sins against knowledge and conscience, and labour in all good things in all places, and at all times, to live and walk *Use 2.*

walk so upright with God, that thou never hurt or wound thy conscience, though thou mightest get the greatest gain, honour or pleasure; yet if it be sin, and that against thy knowledge and conscience, abhor it, flie from it, commit it not, if thou lovest thine own soul. For if sins of ignorance shall not escape punishment, unless men repent, much more sins against knowledge and conscience, for these provoke the Lord exceedingly to turn away his favour from us, draw down his judgements upon us, wound our consciences, deprive us of the feeling of God's love and favour, bring trouble of mind, and a wounded conscience. O then, would you enjoy this great blessing of peace of conscience, which is a continual feast? would you be loath to lose the feeling of God's love, and comfort of his holy Spirit? Avoid all sins, but especially presumptuous sins against knowledge and conscience, they wound and hurt us, especially depriving us of all peace and consolation.

Use 5. If the Lord should at any time leave

leave us to sin, even presumptuous sins against knowledge and conscience, which is a fearful thing, yet let us not despair with *Cain*, and say, *Our sins are greater then can be forgiven*; but flie to God's mercy, and there seek to renew God's love again, intreating the Lord to restore unto us the joy of his salvation, and then we may obtain the favour of God again, and renew the feeling of his love. Let us truly repent and bewail our grievous and hainous sins, seek earnestly for grace and pardon, and give the Lord no rest at all, till we find that he be reconciled to us in Christ Jesus.

Mark (I pray you) what was the special thing wherein *David*, the holy servant of God, did rejoyce, not in gold or silver, nor in pleasure and carnal delight, not in lands and livings, nor in his Kingdom; but in the salvation of God, in his love, in pardon of his sins, and salvation of his soul. So as hence we learn, That there is no true joy in any other thing in the world, but onely in the mer-

Doct. 4. Pardon of sin the soundest joy.

Phil. 3. 7, & 8.

Luke 10. 20.

mercy of God, and the salvation of our souls.

And indeed, what other joy can there be? for though the Lord should bestow on us all things which he hath made, with abundance of the things of this Life; yea, though with *David* we might command a Kingdome, yet unless withall we have this comfort, that we are at peace with God, and have our sins pardoned, (alas) they would all prove unto us, as *Job's* friends, *miserable comforters:* But poor souls, many know no other comfort, but such as arises from temporal things, as Gold, Silver, &c. wherein they differ not from Beasts, which have their delight as well as they, in those things which are fitting and agreeable to their nature.

Seeing *David* places all his joy and spiritual rejoycing in the Salvation of God, that is, in the pardon of his sins, in the feeling of God's love, and in the salvation of his soul; therefore it shews that there is no other cause of sound joy but in this alone, so that if we have this, we have great

cause

ſe to rejoyce and be glad; but if
is be wanting, either we had never
e feeling of God's love, nor aſſu-
nce of Salvation, or elſe have loſt it,
d therefore ſhould uſe all bleſſed
eans to attain unto it again, for we
nnot have one dram of ſaving com-
rt and true joy, but only in the favour
f God, and the aſſurance of his love
r our ſalvation.

This ſhews, that all the joy of wick- *Uſe 2.*
d men, in all their ſports and paſtimes,
no true and ſolid joy, but a carnal
y, a ſwiniſh joy: For how can the
art of that man or woman re-
yce, which knows not whether
od loves them, or hates them, whe-
er they ſhall be ſaved or damned,
at joy can they have? It is madneſs
ther than joy and mirth. *David* ſaith,
at the wicked men joy in their *Corn*,
Oyl, *Wine*, outward worldly and tem-
oral things; but he deſires the lo-
ing countenance of the Lord's fa-
our and grace, which ſhall make him
oy more than all they in their pomp
d vanities: And when it will cauſe
im to lye down in reſt, peace and
ſafety;

safely; whereas the joy of wicked men is gone in a moment, utterly lost, and past recovery for ever.

And stablish me with thy free Spirit.

Second part of the verse.

In this second part of the verse contains a prayer to the Lord for a new mercy, namely, the blessed grace of corroboration, to be strengthned in grace and obedience, and kept from sin by the grace and Spirit of God in time to come. As if he should have said, O Lord my God, I do not onely pray for the pardon of my sins past, which are many and great, but I do humbly intreat thy divine Majesty to give me power and to strengthen me against the like evils in time to come: for I know my weakness, and the wickedness of my heart to be prone to all sin by nature: and if thou shouldest pardon my sins past, and not prevent and keep me from sin in time to come, I should easily mar all, and run headlong into all sin. And therefore I beseech thy Majesty stablish and strengthen me with grace from thy holy Spirit, that I may

Note.

serve

ve and please thee all my days with willing and ready heart.

Stablish me.

He word signifies properly to underprop and shore up some-ng that is weak, declining, and rea-to fall.

Hence learn, that even the best of od's children, that have the grea-t graces, and be strengthned in th, yet if they be left unto them-ves, alas, they be as weak as wa-r, they be not able to stand against e least assault and temptation of e Devil. This *David* felt and found himself, and confessed his wicked-ss, and desires the Lord to esta-lish and uphold him, to shore him by the grace of his holy Spi-t. *Peter*, who seemed to be a valiant Champion, and defied his enemies, nd vowed he would rather die then eny his Lord and Master Christ Je-s, yet being left to himself, how ully did he fall, and cowardly deny im three times in one hour, at the oice of a little girle? So all the falls nd infirmities of God's children, though

Doct. 5. Man weak being left to him-self. Exod. 15. 34. Jer. 23. 24. Ps. 78 49 Ex. 9. 27. Jud. 3. 13. Mar. 22. 45. Heb. 6.

though never so wise as *Solomon*, strong as *Sampson*, righteous as *Lot*, holy as *David*, doth prove this to be true: And *Paul*, though he was a blessed Vessel of mercy, greatly enlightned and sanctified, cryes out, Ro. 7.24. *O wretched man that I am*; and feels the great corruptions of his heart. The child of God may be compared to a staff in a man's hand, so long as thou dost stay it, and hold it, it will stand upright, but pull away your hand, down it will of it self: Even so do we stand, while the Lord doth stay us, and uphold us, but if he take away his hand, and leave us, down we go. We be like a little Infant that is in the Nurses hand, so long as she holds it, it will go, and move, and stand; but if she pull away her hand, it falls, and takes a knock. As God is the Author of all grace, and first Fountain of all mercy; he alone can turn the heart, work Faith, Repentance, and Obedience: For it is God alone that must give the second grace, namely, corroboration, continuance in grace, or grace to continue

tinue in faith and obedience.

This confutes the Doctrine of the Papists, which hold, that a man having grace from God to believe, and repent, can merit at God's hands grace to continue, that God should *ex condigno*, give him grace to continue, and that a man being once just, can make himself more perfect; but *David* doth here confess that all is of God. *Use* 1.

This serves to reprove them who trust too much on their own power and goodness, rely upon their own Wisdome, Knowledge, and Strength: When once they get a little knowledge and taste of the Word, Oh they think themselves sure and well, they fear no danger, they defie the Devil; so long as they say their prayers, and serve God well, they hope God will keep them, and so are secure and careless; but of all men these are in greatest danger, that least fear danger. Look on *Peter*, he was never more weak than when he thought himself most strong: *I said I shall never be moved; but thou turnedst away thy* *Use* 2. Esa. 30. 6. 1 Cor. 10.

face, and I was sore troubled. Pride goes before a fall.

How should this make every man to fear himself, to suspect his own weakness. *Blessed is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into destruction,* or evil; where *Solomon* sheweth, that a man that doth fear himself and his own weakness, is happy; but he that is secure and trusts in himself, shall certainly fall into evil. The secure sinner, that fears no danger, is the greatest sinner. And therefore not knowing our own weakness, how unable we are to stand of our selves, or to do any good at all, except the Lord indue us with his holy Spirit: it must be a means to make us relie upon the Lord, and pray unto him, that he would uphold us in integrity, faith, obedience, and in true repentance: for if *David*, *Peter*, &c. did fall, whither then shall we fall, if the Lord do but a little leave us to our selves?

VERSE

VERSE 13.

Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

David to his petition joyns promises.

David in this verse doth professe unto the Lord, that if he shall deal thus graciously with him, to pardon and remit his great and grievous sins, and to receive him again into his love and favour, that he will not be unmindful and unthankful for so great a mercy; but he will become a preacher and proclaimer of God's mercy to others, and labour to turn many to God by true repentance.

Parts of the verse.

In this verse we have two parts, first, the promise which *David* maketh unto the Lord, and the duty he vows unto him, namely, *I will teach thy ways unto the wicked.* Secondly, the issue and blessed effect, namely, this, that by his example many poor sinners shall repent, and come to God for mercy.

Then shall I teach.

Sense. THat is, after I shall find and feel thy mercy bestowed upon me, I will, like a vessel of mercy, draw it out to the good of others. *I will*, that is, I that have fallen and sinned so grievously, and transgressed thy commandments, will teach and publish how mercifull, good and gracious thou hast been to me, and to my soul, and will speak out of the sense and feeling of mine own conscience.

Thy ways.

BY the ways of God here is meant that course and manner of dealing which the Lord taketh with sinners, when they do truly repent; namely, that he is most ready and willing to embrace them, and shew mercy unto them, when they shall acknowledge and confess their sins, bewail them, beg the pardon of them, and seek to him for mercy.

The goodness of God towards our selves must be made known.

Seeing *David* doth here profess, that if God shall deal thus graciously with him, that then he will be a proclaimer of the same mercy to others: we learn, That it is the duty

of every one to shew unto others what God hath done for his soul: when God is good and gracious unto us, we must still be ready to acknowledg the same unto others, thereby to draw them on likewise to a manifestation of the truth, and to seek for the same favour and grace at God's hands. *Mat.* 5.16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works may glorifie your Father which is in heaven.* Thus the Spirit of God in the Scriptures remembreth the righteousness of *Noah*, the faith and obedience of *Abraham*, the patience of *Job*, the chastity of *Joseph*, the meekness of *Moses*. And Christ himself doth testifie of the graces of God that shined in *John Baptist*, that *he was a burning and shining light*, *Joh.* 5. Thus the Apostle *Peter* testifieth, 1 *Pet.* 2. *Have your conversation honest amongst the Gentils, that they which speak evil of you, as of evil doers, may by your good works which they shall see, glorifie God in the day of visitation.* 1 *Cor.* 9. 11. 2 *Cor.* 8. 1,2. *Rom.* 4. 11. 13.

We learn hence ever to be ready *Use* 1.

to make known unto others what God hath done for our ſelves; if ſo they may further Religion, or provoke others to godlineſs, or bring glory to God. God is not aſhamed of us, to be called our God, and to do us good: let us then never be aſhamed to acknowledge his love unto us, for it were a fooliſh modeſty in us to conceal thoſe things which ſhould be uttered. There was a time indeed when Chriſt would not have himſelf or his works known, but that was when that knowledge might hinder him and his preaching. But *Mat.* 10 27. he commanded his Apoſtles to ſpeak that in the light, which he had told them in darkneſs, and to preach that on the houſe tops, which he had told them in the ear; for now would Chriſt have himſelf publiſhed abroad. And thus we ſee how to behave our ſelves in reſpect of God's gifts, we muſt not be aſhamed to confeſs them, but declare them.

Doct. 2 Thankfulneſs required.

Seeing *David* here profeſſes unto the Lord, that he will not be unmindful and unthankful for his mercy

mercy ſhewed unto him, but will to the uttermoſt of his power praiſe God for it, and ſhews his thankfulneſs in drawing others to God. Hence we learn, that it is the duty of all the children of God, that they ſhould labour with their own ſouls to be thankful unto God for every bleſſing he beſtows upon them, to be mindful of it, to praiſe God for it, and to ſhew it in doing good to others: it is all the Lord looks for at our hands, to acknowledge his love and kindneſs, to be thankful for it; and when we ſhall be truly thankful for a benefit received, it is an excellent means to move the Lord to beſtow a new bleſſing upon us; as we ſee, if a poor man receive a ſmall favour at our hands, and ſhall be thankful for it; we will ſay he is worthy to have a good turn, it is well beſtowed, I ſee he is thankful for it. So when the Lord beſtoweth a benefit upon a man, and ſees he is thankful for it, and ſpeaks of it to the honour of God, the Lord is moved thereby to beſtow another, but

Phil. 4. 4. Exod. 18 10.

Pſ. 126. Gen. 14. 19. Pſ. 32 22. Pſ. 32. 1.

he that is unthankful for the old, is not worthy to receive new.

Hast thou receiv'd any special favour, blessing or benefit of God? know it is thy duty to be thankful for it, to acknowledge it, to speak of it, and to praise God for it. *Rejoyce, ye righteous, in the Lord, for it becomes upright men to be thankful.* Ps. 33. 1. It is a comely and a most fit thing; and *David* calls upon his soul oft-times to perform this duty. *Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name: praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.* Ps. 103. 1.

And above all other mercies, let us bless God for his love in Christ for the pardon of our sins, as *David* doth here, and *Psal.* 103. *Forget not all his benefits, who gave thee pardon of thy sins, and forgave thee all thine iniquities.* And therefore let us remember this duty, and think more seriously of God's blessings and benefits bestowed upon us. The greatness of them, and number, and continuance of them, and so labour in some measure to be thankful unto God, and

especially

especially for the pardon of our sins in Christ Jesus. And withall, let us shew it in doing what good we can unto others.

Let us shun that foul sin of unthankfulness to forget God's blessings, and pass over his mercies. Let us not be like the nine Lepers, who not one of them return'd to praise God, onely the poor *Samaritan*, finding himself cleansed, came to bless God for it: So let us take heed that we be not found in that number who forget God's favour. The Lord hath been good unto us, washed and cleansed our souls in Christ's bloud; let us return unto God, let us confess it to his glory, and with *David* call upon our souls not to forget the benefits of the Lord. *Use* 1.

It is a note of an unthankful heart to obtain a benefit, and not to acknowledge it. Praise is comely, and well becometh the Saints of God; the want whereof taketh away the comfort and sweet fruit of God's blessings from us. It is a great offence to be unthankful unto men, but far

greater unto God, by whom we live, move and have our being. And therefore let us learn, that whensoever we have obtained any favour or blessing at God's hands, be it concerning this life or the life to come; let us thankfully return the calves of our lips unto him, and let us never shew our selves more ready to ask, then we are willing to praise the Lord when he hath granted the request of our lips.

Doct. 3 Fruit of faith to seek the good of others.

It is a special fruit of faith and unfeigned repentance, to convey grace unto others, to shew what God hath done for our souls, and to draw out the blessings which God hath bestowed upon us, to the good and benefit of others. The Prophet *David* calleth all men unto him, and

Ps. 66.6. makes his speech, *Come* (saith he) *I will shew you what God hath done for my soul.* And the Elect are called vessels of mercy, because they being themselves filled with the mercy of God, they should draw out the same good liquor for the comfort of others. St. *Paul* saith, *God had mercy on*

him

him that he might shew mercy unto others. The child of God is not like unto churlish *Nabal*, to say, *Every man for himself*, and keep all for themselves; but they be pitiful and bountiful, yea, and (to their power) helpful unto others. Ps. 119. Gal. 3. 2 Cor. 1. Is. 38. 1. Luk. 22. 2

Use 1. This may serve to comfort those who have been careful for the performance of this duty, that have been careful to make others partakers of the same comfort they have reaped themselves. It is a blessed thing indeed, when men have endeavoured to their power to benefit others, to exhort them, to admonish them, to comfort them, and in all things to have sought their good. Oh what a wonderful consolation and comfort shall this be unto us, when we leave this world, and go the way of all flesh, to remember we have sought the good of others. *Dan.* 12. 3. *They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars in the firmament.* Luke 12. 43. *Blessed is that servant whom his master coming shall find so doing.* We shall find more comfort of heart,

and joy of conscience, when we depart this life, that we have been faithful in that little committed to our trust, and made others to partake of it, then if we had great abundance of earthly blessings.

Use 2. This may serve to reprove that common conceit in men's minds, that so long as they do well themselves, they need not care how others do, whether they sink or swim, and therefore they keep all to themselves, never look to benefit others: like a covetous and foolish *Nabal*, part not with a bit to *David*: so these keep all for themselves, by no means seek to draw out the graces of God for the good of others. But it is impossible for any Christian man or woman, who hath tasted truly of the mercy of God for his comfort, and the work of grace, but he must communicate the same to the good of others, and indeed they are never so profitable as then. As we see Spices, Is. 38.19. though never so sweet and savoury, are not commendable until they be rubbed and chafed. And therefore let

us

us remember to practise this duty, to help others, and instruct them, and communicate our knowledge, comfort, experience and judgment even to the good of others.

When *David* saith, he will teach, not his own ways, but God's, namely, how the Lord dealeth with penitent sinners, we learn what it is that the Minister of the word ought especially to teach poor sinners, namely, *The ways of God*; that is, how God deals with poor sinners: namely, that he is most willing to embrace them, and pardon their crimes, if they will unfeignedly repent. Christ was exceeding plentiful in this kind of teachings howsoever he did sometimes declare and pronounce judgment to impenitent sinners, yet it was his usual course to preach God's infinite mercy to all such as would repent, to invite them, to persuade and assure them to turn to God.

Doct. 4. What Doctrin Ministers ought to teach.

Mat. 12. 18.

Ro. 12. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 18.

Well then, this may direct all such as the Lord hath called to preach his word, to take this course, that howsoever they may and must pronounce

Use 2.

nounce God's judgments against impenitent offenders, yet they must preach God's infinite mercy in Christ to all that will repent, and shew how ready the Lord is to shew mercy to all them that confess and acknowledge their faults, and be weary of them, and desire pardon. For sure it is, that if there be any spark of grace in men's hearts, when they shall hear of God's abundant mercy in Christ, that the Lord standeth at the door and knocks; that the Lord, like the father of the Prodigal child, will meet us in the mid-way; it must needs, if there be not a heart of steel, make our bowels erne, and for shame to seek unto the Lord.

Rev. 3. Luk. 15.

And it was *Paul's* manner to intreat men that they would be reconciled unto God, to beseech them in his name with love and kindness, with tears and prayers, to pray them, to intreat them, to beseech his hearers: and we shall find that churlish, rough and harsh dealing great words, and thundering

speeches,

speeches, be not always the best to win men's souls: but when we deal with a mild and loving spirit intreat men, and beseech them to repent and turn to God, it must needs affect them.

It must stir their hearts up to a most careful and attentive hearing and listning to the word of God. For a man cannot perceive and know the ways of God by nature; no, by nature we conceive of God as a terrible Judge and angry God, and flie from him as *Adam* did, and therefore we had need to have the word of God preached and taught unto us, and be instructed in the ways of God, how the Lord our good God hath shewed mercy unto great sinners, and will to us if we can repent and seek unto him. For the Lord must draw us by his mercy, else we cannot come at him.

To the wicked: And sinners shall be converted unto thee.

THat is, impenitent sinners, such live in sin without repentance. Hence mark who had need to be taught

Doct. 5. Ignorant are to be taught the ways of God.

taught in the ways of God, namely, poor ſinners, that live and lie in ſin, even the loſt ſheep of the houſe of *Iſrael*, and ſuch as ſit in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, ſuch as never heard of God, or faith, or repentance, &c. Such poor ſouls had need to be taught the ways of God.

Uſe 1. This may admoniſh all thoſe that be ſet over God's people, Magiſtrates, and ſuch as have power in their hand, to provide that ſuch poor ignorant people as want, the means, may be taught the ways of God. *How ſhall they call on him on whom they have not believed? how ſhall they believe him of whom they have not heard? how ſhall they hear without a preacher?* Rom. 10. 14. *And where prophecying fails the people periſh.* Pro. 29. 18. And it is ſaid of our Saviour Chriſt, that when he ſaw the people as poor ſheep having no ſhepherd, he had compaſſion on them, and his bowels earned towards them. Oh that the bowels of all ſuch that have charge to look unto it, might earn for the poor ſouls of this land, to provide for them the bread of life. Mar. 14.

The

The chief cauſe why men live in ſin, be ſo vile, wicked and unclean, is, becauſe they be not taught the word and ways of God; it could not be if they were taught and inſtructed, that they ſhould be ſo vile and wicked, ſo ignorant, prophane, irreligious and ſuperſtitious. But where viſions fail, the people muſt needs periſh.

And therefore thoſe that ſeek to take away teaching and preaching of the word of God, of what ſpirits are they? *David*, he thinks it the onely way to bring men to God, to convert poor ſinners: and therefore to take it away, to root out the Miniſtery of the word, and means of our ſalvation, what is it elſe but to caſt away the ſouls of the people? to famiſh them, to pine them, and to ſtarve them? And therefore let us pray unto God, through Chriſt Jeſus, that the Lord of the Harveſt would ſend forth painful Labourers into his Harveſt. Mat. 9.

The ſecond part of the verſe ſhews the fruit of this duty, that *David* will perform, namely, that 2. Part of the verſe.

hereby

hereby, by this Doctrin, and his example, many a poor ſinner ſhall be converted unto God.

Doct. 9. Converſion of a ſinner is God's work.

In that *David* here promiſeth to himſelf this uſe and fruit, that he ſhall be by his preaching and example, a means to bring others to God. Hence we may learn a gracious comfort for all godly Miniſters of the word, who labour both by life and doctrin to win others, that if they ſhall be painful in teaching, and careful to live a godly life, they ſhall certainly find the bleſſing of God upon their labours, to the converting of ſinners, and ſaving of ſouls. *If I had ſent theſe Prophets, and if they had ſtood in my counſel, and declared my ways unto my people, then they ſhould have turned them from their evil ways, and from the wickedneſs of their own inventions.* Jer. 23. 22.

Where the Lord ſhews, that all ſuch as be the true Prophets of God, ſtand in his ſtead, and teach his ways, they ſhall ſee the bleſſing of God upon their labours. And the cauſe why men convert not ſouls, is becauſe

they

they were never ſent of God, and do not teach God's ways, and ſtand not in his ſtead; or elſe becauſe though they teach the truth, yet their lives be vile and wicked, they pluck down with one hand what they build with the other, and deſtroy that in life which they teach in doctrin.

Hence mark the reaſon why ſo many great and learned men, of excellent gifts, wit and learning, do not convert many ſouls unto God; becauſe they either teach not God's ways, but their own ways, their wit, eloquence and devices; or elſe though they teach well, yet they live ill, and ſo cauſe their doctrin to be leſs regarded, and weaken the power of it by their ſinful life; and it pleaſes God in his great mercy to uſe the labour of his poor ſervants, who dare not utter nor ſpeak their own word, nor ſeek themſelves, but God's word, in plain evidence and ſimplicity, and live according to their teaching, the Lord doth bleſs their labours, for the converſion of ſinners, and ſaving of poor ſouls. *Uſe* 1.

It

Use 2.

It might admonish all those, who either teach their own ways by painted eloquence, toys or tales, or else though they teach the truth, that they joyn with it a godly life, else they may be long enough ere they do any good, and if they would convert sinners, let them first be converted. Luke 22 32. *When thou art converted, Strengthen thy brethren.* And let no such careless Ministers wonder that God gives no blessing to their labours, seeing they fail either in teaching God's word truly and plainly, or else in life they live wicked and ungodly. One *Achan* is enough to infect a whole family; one *Jonah*, a fugitive servant of God, is able to endanger a ship, and the whole company in it: so one sin is able to destroy the soul of man; Oh then, what will a world of sins do, which we daily and hourly commit against our Creator!

VERSE

VERSE 14.

Deliver me from bloud, O God, the God of my ſalvation, and my tongue ſhall ſing joyfully of thy righteouſneſs.

IN this verſe, yet once again *David* returns to intreat for mercy and favour at the hands of God, that he would pardon his great and grievous ſins, yea, his bloudy ſins, and that God would in mercy deliver him from that puniſhment which was due unto him for the ſame; for he intreats the Lord to deliver him from bloud, that is, his heinous and capital ſin of murder, and ſhedding that innocent bloud of *Urias*, his faithful ſervant, and many others with him, ſo alſo the puniſhment due for it.

David cannot ſatisfie himſelf in ſeeking mercy for his ſins.

2 Sam. 11

This verſe contains two parts: Firſt, a requeſt with great earneſtneſs to God for deliverance from his grievous crime, *Deliver me from bloud.* Secondly, reaſons to move the Lord thereunto, namely, taken from the honour and glory of God, which

Parts of the verſe.

which he will shew forth: *And my tongue shall sing joyfully of thy righteousness.*

In the Petition first mark what is the request, namely, that God would deliver him from bloud, that is, a most cruel and bloudy sin of shedding the innocent bloud of many of his subjects.

Secondly, the manner of his request, *O God, thou art the God of my salvation*; that he prays to God now with faith, assuring himself, that upon his repentance God was now reconciled unto him; and though he had sinned grievously, yet not clean fallen from grace, but so as still he could call God his God, and the God of his salvation.

Deliver me from bloud.

Doct. 1. The heinousness of the sin of murther.

THat is, from the punishment which is due unto me for shedding the innocent bloud of *Urias*, and the rest which were slain with him.

We must observe that which hath been taught before, namely, that *David* prayed often and earnestly unto God

God for the pardon of his ſins, he could not at one or two petitions obtain it, but is fain to pray again and again for pardon. Hence we learn, That murther and ſhedding of innocent bloud is a moſt horrible ſin; and he that is guilty of bloud, it will wound his conſcience, it will make him to quake and tremble at God's vengeance which purſues him, unleſs he repent; as in *Cain*, after he had ſlain his brother, and the Lord had brought him to ſight of his cruel murther, he cries out, that his ſin is greater then can be forgiven, and that every one that meets him would kill him: ſuch is the conſcience guilty of murther, it can find no reſt, no eaſe, neither in company or alone, in anything, but ſtill torments the mind, till God gives grace truly to repent. Gen. 4.

Neither may or muſt we think that this guilt and terror of our Minde or Conſcience commeth through the guiltineſs of the Law, ſhame of the world, or fear of puniſhment; for let a murtherer have ſecurity given him from all the Laws

Laws and Freedom from all punishment, yet a murtherer should never be at quiet, his conscience would ever trouble and torment him, yea, and follow him up and down in all places, and open his own mouth to bewray himself. Thus are God's judgments upon them that they should fear all things, who will not fear him that made all things. If a man had all the pleasures that heart could desire, yet that can yield him no true comfort and contentment, when the conscience is guilty of so great and horrible sins; and albeit for a time the conscience of carnal men, that never truly repented of their sins, seemeth to be at rest; yet it is a wild and savage beast, which, lying asleep, seemeth tame and gentle, but being raised and roused up, flieth in a man's face.

Gen. 42. 1.

Use 1. Seeing murther and shedding of innocent bloud is so horrible a sin, so odious and execrable, so fearful and damnable, how should it make all men shun it, and be afraid of it, never to imbrue their hands in the bloud of any man, for bloud will

have bloud. *Who so sheddeth man's bloud, by man his bloud shall be shed, for in the image of God made he man.* Gen. 9.6.

And this was one special thing which moved *David* to intreat the Lord, not onely to pardon his bloudy sin of killing *Uriah*, but also that he would not punish him, and bring his vengeance upon him, and his children after him, for shedding of his bloud. Well then, abhor this fearful sin of murther, for bloud will have bloud, and will cry for vengeance to Heaven. And here we are to be sorry, and to bewail our sinful times, that shedding of bloud is not punished more severely. Wilful murther is winked at, and mocked at, and made but a mony-matter. *Yea,* (saith the Lord) *because of oathes the land shall mourn*; so for murther it shall mourn. Jer. 13. 10. Hos. 4.

Well, let us beware of this foul sin of murther, and shun all occasions that tend to it, as hatred, drunkennesse, desire of revenge, quarrellings, fightings, &c. These sins of *David* did multiply his sorrows, for he watered his couch with teares:

a world of sins must needs have a sea of tears to wash them away, as *David* did, for upon his true repentance, God's favour was afterwards proportionable to his sorrows.

And if it be so heinous and horrible a sin to shed the bloud of the body, and to kill the body; if murthering of the body (I say) be so heinous, what shall become of soul-murtherers, that shed the bloud of poor souls? It is ten thousand times more grievous, as the soul is far more worth then the body; and if he shall perish, and is worthy to die that murthers the body, how much more is he worthy to die that sheds the bloud, not of one, but of many a poor soul? And such be all those that either teach not the word of God at all, or teach it negligently; they be soul-murtherers, and shall give a just account for it one day.

Ezek. 3.

Use 3. We see that no man, though never so great, can go free from God's judgements for a murther. *David* was a great King, a man that was above all mens Laws, yet the conscience

nce of his ſin accuſed him, and he could have no reſt, till he had got the pardon of it. So as we ſee the great force of man's conſcience, though he could eſcape all the judgments of men, yet the conſcience will accuſe till God do clear him: and this we may ſee in many men, who being guilty of this ſin, although they have by mony or friends got pardon and freedom by the Law of man, yet if God touch them for it, they can never have peace till they have bewailed this ſin, and got the pardon from God; but ſome of them even pine and languiſh away, and never look up all their days, ſuch is the conſcience of murther, and ſhedding innocent bloud, that he may flie a thouſand miles, he may be a great man, a King, that no man dare call him to account, yet he carries that in his boſome which will dog him and purſue him, neither ſhall he find reſt till he have repented, and be reconciled to God by the bloud of Chriſt.

Iſ. 66. 24. Mar. 9. 45 Pſ. 49. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Doct. 2. God hath mercy for ſuch as ſeek mercy.

Here is matter of comfort and conſolation for all ſuch as have been great

and grievous ſinners, notorious wicked livers, that if they can repent, be humbled, bewail their ſins, beg pardon, the Lord will ſhew them mercy. *David* here found favour for the pardon of his bloudy ſins, adultery and murther, upon his true repentance: ſo *Peter* for his grievous and heinous ſin; and *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom were caſt ſeven Devils was ſaved; *Lot*, though he committed inceſt with his own Daughters, yet found favour at God's hands. So as we ſee great ſinners, if they unfeignedly repent, ſhall find great mercy.

Luk. 8.2.

This is waranted from the Lord's own mouth. *Iſ.* 1.18. *Though your ſins were as crimſon, they ſhall be made as white as ſnow; though they were as red as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as wool.* And again, *Iſ.* 44. 22. *I have put away thy tranſgreſſions like a cloud, and thy ſins like a miſt.* *Iſ.* 33.24. and *Iſ.* 43.25. *Jer.* 31. 31.

Uſe 1. Let every one of us liſten to this Doctrin: Haſt thou been a notorious wicked liver, a miſerable ſinner, a common drunkard, a filthy liver, a moſt

most vile and notorious blasphemer, a thief or robber? hast thou hated and persecuted God's Ministers, and his dear children, and contemned the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ? Well, so if thou canst truly repent, confess thy grievous sin, bewail it, cry to God for mercy and pardon of it; the Lord will shew thee mercy, for no sin, though never so great, can sever thee, and cut thee off from mercy, if thou hast grace to repent and beg the pardon of it. And therefore though thy sins have been many and great, adultery, murther, &c. take heed thou despairest not with *Cain*, to say, *My sin is greater then can be forgiven*; but repent with *David*, and God will pardon it. Is. 1. 16, 18.

Let no man presume hereupon to sin, because God will pardon great sins: For as it is true that God will pardon great sins, when men repent truly of them, so without repentance there is no pardon of the least sin; and if thou shalt wittingly and willingly run into great sins, it is a great doubt that thou shalt never, or hardly, *Use* 2.

hardly get out of them: he that sins because God is merciful, doth abuse his mercy, and then his mercy shall be turned into judgment. God's mercy should lead us to repentance, and not make us bold to sin.

Rom. 2 4

Doct. 4. The punishment of sin should terrifie us from sinning.

Seeing *David* prays and intreats the Lord, not onely to deliver him from sin, but also from the punishment due to his sin, the curse of God which was due to his grievous sins of adultery and murther; as the Prophet told him, because he had done this evil, *The sword shall never depart from his house, and his own sons should defile his wives*; We learn in regard of God's fearful judgments, plagues and punishments that attend and wait upon sin, men ought to be afraid to commit sin against God; for sure it is, that the curse follows sin, and as sin grows, so grows the curse. For the Lord is a just God, and must needs punish the transgressors of his Law. And although as yet he takes not his loving kindness from them, neither suffers his truth to fail, yet he will visit their transgressions

2 Sam. 10

sions with the Rod, and their sins with scourges, as we may see here by the example of *David*, of the people of *Israel*, *Judg.* 4. 1, 2. of *Miriam*, *Numb.* 12. of *Solomon*, *Asa*, *Jehosophat*, *Josiah*, *Hezekiah*, *&c.* If then we break, and do not observe his Statutes, and keep not his Commandments, when he searcheth with lights, and findeth out our sins, we must, with *Achan*, give the glory to God, and make confession unto him; we must pronounce righteousnes to belong unto him, and unto our selves open shame and confusion of faces for ever.

Well then, let us remember this, if we sin, certainly the Lord will plague us, and punish us, either in our body, our soul, goods or good name, wife or children, the Lord will find us out, we cannot escape his judgments, we cannot hide or cloak our sins from him; if men could be persuaded of this, O they would be afraid to lie and continue in sin, if they thought God were a just God to torment them, and plague them for their *Use* 1.

sins: how dareſt thou ſin, if thou couldeſt be perſuaded of this, that God will certainly plague thee? Indeed the mercy of God ſhould make us loath to ſin, but if that will not, yet let his juſtice terrifie and fright all ſecure and careleſs ſinners.

Uſe 2. Let no man ſooth himſelf to think he ſhall eſcape. If any man hear the curſes of God's Law againſt ſin, and ſhall bleſs himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace although I walk after the ſtubbornneſs of my heart; then the Lord will not be merciful unto that man, but the wrath of the Lord and his jealouſie ſhall ſmoke againſt him, and he ſhall bring upon him every curſe written in his Law, to root him clean out: *I will viſit thoſe that be frozen in their dregs, and ſay in their hearts, God will neither do good nor evil.* And if neither the mercy of God will move us, nor his judgments make us afraid to commit ſin, our caſe is fearful and dangerous.

Rev. 20. 14.

Note.

Uſe 3. Laſtly, Seeing God chaſtenerh his own children when they offend, then

then it must needs follow, that the wicked, which are none of his, shall not escape his revenging hand: if the Lord be severe against sinners, that he will not spare, no not the sins that fall to his own dear children, being of his own household, and Citizens of his own Kingdom, and the members of his own body; if the Lord do deal so sharply with these, O how heavy will he lay his judgments upon the wicked? 1 *Pet.* 4. 17, 18. *The time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God: If it first begin with us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and sinner appear?* But God correcteth the godly in mercy, the wicked in wrath; the one as a loving Father, the other as a just Judge. O that all wicked and ungodly men would lay this to heart, and know that assured judgment is reserved for them at the great day of the Lords general Assize, when they shall, will they, nill they, plead guilty at God's Bar, where the Register

book of all their actions shall be brought forth, and they shall receive according to their works.

Doct. 4 True care of a penitent to aggravate his sins.

In that *David* speaks in the plural number, *Deliver me from bloud*, that my most heinous, horrible, and cruel sin; he doth not mince it, or lessen it, but sets it out in colours, a bloudy sin, a monstrous sin. Therefore in true repentance and confession of our sins, we must labour to express them to the full, and make room enough to beat our consciences, to make our hearts smart, and feel the weight and circumstances by aggravating them, to set them out, to make them appear as vile and filthy as we can; for thereby we shew our grief and hatred for them: As the Church of God did, in the ninth of *Daniel*, who confessed her sins, not lightly, but with wonderful and great aggravation, in heaping up one thing on another; and as St. *Austin* did, who for a small offence, as we account of it in our time and days, for robbing of an Orchard or Garden of some Pears or Apples, or such like fruit, as in his

second Book of his Confessions, the fourth Chapter, doth appear, how he doth aggravate his sin in weighing all the circumstances.

First, he saith, This theft which I committed, was not onely in the Law of the Lord forbidden, but by man too; and I had it in my intention and thoughts daily, and did remember that it was a sin, and yet did it.

Secondly, I wilfully resolved to do it, what e're should come of it; and yet I did it.

Thirdly, I did it not for want, but in disdain of piety, and likewise out of an envious mind to injure others.

Fourthly, I had in my own ground great store of the same fruit, nay, better too.

Fifthly, I did steal, not so much to delight in the act, as my own theft, that I might say with my old companions, that I and they had robb'd such an Orchard, at such a time.

Sixthly, That there were in my company a number of desperate youths, and incarnate devils to egge me on.

Seventhly, he saith, That before

they went, or thought of this action they had been a drinking, sporting and dancing.

Eighthly, We in a covetous manner, after we had eaten our bellies full, did carry all away.

Ninthly, We carried so many away, that they were a heavy burthen to us.

Tenthly, When we came to our abode, we gave them to the Hogs, and abused the creatures of God by wantonness and excess. And then he concludes, and cries out, *O my Creator, O my God, behold my heart, I beseech thee to shew pity and compassion upon me; annoint my wounds with the oyl of mercy, restore me my sight, cloath my nakedness, enrich me that am poor, strengthen me that am weak, help me that am faln.* And thus did *David* which is the party meant in my Text, cry out and say, *Deliver me from bloud-guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation.*

This condemneth most men, who when they are told of their sins, do seek to cloak and excuse them,

to

to make them little ſins of great ſins, if they could well: it is a ſign of a naughty heart, as we ſee in *Saul*, who would not confeſs his ſin, but excuſe it: it ſhews men are not humbled nor grieved, have no hatred of it: but if we do truly ſee the loathſomeneſs of ſin, O we would aggravate it, yea, ſpeak as bad as we can of it, and not excuſe it in any caſe. The ſecond thing in the Petition is the manner of it, namely, that he doth pray in faith and affiance of God's mercy; for he prays unto God, and deſcribes him to be the God of his ſalvation, becauſe he puts all his affiance in God's mercy for ſalvation, and acknowledgeth it to be the gift of God. 2 Sam. 15

Doct. 5. Faith required in Prayer.

In that *David* thus prayeth for the pardon of his ſins with faith and affiance, we learn, That if we deſire to obtain our requeſts, we muſt pray to God with faith and affiance in God's mercy; for at the ſame time that God toucheth a poor ſinner to mourn for his ſins, and to repent, he gives him faith to pray to him with affiance

assiance for pardon and salvation. So then we see, whatsoever we ask at God's hands, we must ask in faith: *If any lack wisdom, let him ask in faith, and waver not; for he that wavers can have no hope to obtain at God's hands.*

Jam. 5.6. Heb. 11. 1.

Whosoever doubteth whether God will grant his requests or not, can never pray for any thing earnestly and effectually. This our Saviour teacheth, *Mark* 11. 24. *Whatsoever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall have it, and it shall be done unto you.* And none can have this assurance, that God is ready to hear them, and to grant their requests, but onely the faithful, who have first this assurance that their sins are pardoned, and that they are reconciled to God in Christ Jesus.

How should this move us all to labour to get saving faith, that so we may pray in faith, and obtain our requests, pardon of sins, wisdom, the gifts of God's Spirit, &c. For he that comes in unbelief can look for no mercy at God's hands: And

Use 1.

And therefore the prayer of many unbelievers, ignorant ſouls, (alas) they be but babling, and can do no good. O then, let us labour to be able to ſay, My God, give me this or that.

This muſt teach us to moderate our deſires, and take heed we ask not any thing that is not warranted by the Word, for unleſs it be warranted by the Word, we cannot have any aſſurance he will hear us; for there is no faith without the Word. And therefore when we ſhall ask things at our own luſt and pleaſure, it is juſt with Almighty God not to hear us.

When *David* calls the Lord, *My God, and the God of my ſalvation*, he acknowledgeth that ſalvation, pardon of ſins, life, and all good things come from God, and are his gracious gifts in Chriſt.

Doct. 6 Praiſe of our ſalvation properly belongs to God.

It is he who at the firſt gave us life, when we were ſtark dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. It is he again that keeps our ſouls in life; if we fall, he raiſeth us up; when we wander, he recalleth

s

us from judgments past, present and to come: he hath, doth, and will deliver us, so that he may well be called *The God of our salvation.*

Use 1. Let us then acknowledge this, that all the good things we enjoy, the favour of God, pardon of our sins, justification, sanctification, redemption, &c. all these are the free mercies and gifts of God in Christ, and then we shall learn to depend on God for the comforts of this life: for we Rom. 3. 2. know that God hath given us Christ, and delivered us from sin, death, hell; how then can he deny us the lesser things for this life?

Use 2. Seeing salvation is the gift of God, we see that the Doctrine of the Papists is erroneous, who teach men that they may merit salvation and mercy at God's hand, pardon of sin, Rom. 6. Dan. 9. salvation and life eternal. *David* ac- Job 42. 6. knowledgeth it to be the free gift Eph. 2. of God, and therefore let us abhor their Doctrine, and our own goodness or worthiness, and acknowledge that all we may enjoy for salvation, it is the free and undeserved favour of God in Christ Jesus. *David*

David, he felt now the heavy weight of God's anger, which preſſed him down exceedingly, and brake his heart; yet withall, he had ſome feeling of the mercy of God, which made him bold to go to God for pardon, ſo that he could call him my God. Wherein we may note the difference of God's children from Infidels, that have no faith; the child of God, although he be touched at the quick with the feeling of God's diſpleaſure, yet he can by faith go to his Father, and make his moan unto him; but a wicked man, that hath no faith in Chriſt, he conceiveth nothing but God's anger and judgment, and therefore flies from him, and cannot give one rap at God's mercy-ſeat, cannot for his life ſay, and confeſs, *My God, my Father*, but is glad to run from God, as *Adam* did, and ſo in time to deſpair, as *Cain* and *Judas* did; for there is no doubt, if they had repented, but they had been forgiven. *Note.*

It is obſerved of *Abraham*, that when he prayed to the Lord for the City

City *Sodom*, that *Abraham* gave over asking before God gave over granting. Therefore I say, let not the multitude of our sins and offences be a means to deter and hinder our repentance; for if it do, it will be our destruction in the end: but let our tongues sing of thy righteousness.

And my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.

THese words contain in them the reason of his requests; as if he should say, If thou shalt, O Lord, pardon my offences, and in mercy deliver me from the curse and punishment due to me for them, my tongue shall be a preacher and publisher of thy mercy unto others: *And my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.* By righteousness is not meant here the justice of God, whereby he takes vengeance for sin, but by righteousness is meant the merciful dealing of God in keeping promise with all repentant sinners, in pardoning and remitting their offences, and receiving them to mercy.

It

It is impoſſible for any man or woman, who have truly taſted of God's mercy in Chriſt for life and ſalvation, to keep it in as it ſhall not break forth and appear; but he that hath his heart affected with God's mercy in Chriſt, it will untie his tongue to relate of it, and to praiſe God for it. As it is not poſſible to keep fire ſo cloſe, but it will ſmoak and flame in time; ſo the feeling of God's love cannot but flame out and appear to the comfort of others.

Doct. 7. God's mercies muſt untie our tongues to praiſe him. Luke 22. 13. 1 Chr. 19 Act. 11. 18. Theſ. 2.

Well, by the rule of this Doctrin, we may ſee that few have their hearts affected with the mercy of God in Chriſt, becauſe they ſeldom or never take occaſion to ſpeak of it, and to praiſe God for it. The poor Leper finding himſelf to be cleanſed, came to praiſe God for it; and *Naaman* would give *Eliſha* a reward: but our hearts have no comfort in them, therefore we open not our hearts to praiſe God. Luke 17

And my tongue.

OBſerve how *David* ſpeaks, that as in heart he will laud God, ſo in

in words he will praiſe him. Of all the parts of a man's body, the tongue onely ſerveth and ought to honour God, and to praiſe him. That ſerveth to unfold the truth of God, to bleſs him, to praiſe him, and to inſtruct others.

Jam. 3.

Well, ſeeing that God hath of all members of the body ordained the tongue to be that member whereby we ſhall honour and praiſe him, let us govern our tongue ſo, as it may ſerve to open his will, to praiſe and laud him, to ſpeak of his wondrous works: let us uſe it well in prayer, in ſpeaking of God's mercy and judgment to inſtruct others: and in any caſe let us ſet a watch before our mouths, that we ſin not in ſpeeches: *If any man ſin not in his tongue, the ſame is a perfect man.*

Jam. 3.

Of thy righteouſneſs.

Doct. 8. God's righteouſneſs what it is.

DAvid calls God's faithfulneſs and truth in keeping promiſe to repentant ſinners, *His righteouſneſs*; wherein note a wonderful comfort to all repentant ſinners, that God avoucheth he ſhall be unjuſt,

just, and unrighteous, if he should not give him mercy and pardon when they repent, seeing he hath tied himself by his promise; so as if he should not shew them mercy, he should be unjust, and deny himself, and be no God. *Note.*

Well then, let this provoke every man to repent, and turn to God: for if thou dost bewail thy sins, and beg pardon, thou mayst challenge it at God's hand, urge him with his promise; and he can do more deny thee mercy then he can deny himself, for he will pardon repentant sinners. And this me thinks should move all sinners to repent, seeing the Lord is true of his word, and cannot deny thee mercy, unless he should deny himself, and so be unjust, which is impossible, for he is true of his word.

VERSE

VERSE XV.

Open thou my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

DAvid having sundry times prayed, and preferred many requests unto God for grace and mercy for pardon of his sins; in the 13 and 14 verses he useth a reason drawn from his thankfulness, which he will shew unto God, in labouring to set forth his glory, in being a faithful and zealous preacher of God's mercy unto others, to draw them unto God.

But here in this verse, *David* finding and feeling his mouth, as it were, fast stopped, and his lips tied up, by reason of his sins, and the feeling of God's anger, intreateth him to open his lips again, and to give him matter of praise and thanksgiving.

Open thou my lips.

AS if he should say, O Lord, I confess that my sins, and the great grief I have conceived for them by the sense and feeling of thy displea-

displeasure hath stopped my mouth, so as I am not able to preach thy mercy, and to praise thee as I desire: now then, I beseech thee, Lord, to take from me that sorrow and extremity of grief, pardoning my sins, and receiving me into favour, that I may have mercy ministred unto me, to praise thy name for the pardon of my sins. Deliver me, O most gracious Father, from thy wrath and eternal damnation.

So long as the conscience doth accuse for sin, and men are not assured of God's love in Christ, poor souls, they cannot so much as once open their mouthes, and move their tongues and lips to praise God with any sound comfort. For how can a condemned man do this, that can find nothing but hell in his conscience, and trouble of mind? No, thy sin and grief for sin, and fear of God's wrath, will stop thy mouth. Let any man make trial of his own heart, and he shall find this true by his own experience, that the guiltinesse of sin, and accusation of conscience for fear of God's anger,

Doct. 1. Sin takes away the use of the Tongue, that man cannot praise God as he should.

ger, will ſtop a man's mouth, ſo as he ſhall not be able to open his mouth with comfort to praiſe the Almighty.

Yea, although a man be elected, called and ſanctified, the dear child of God, a ſound Chriſtian, yet when he ſhall fall into ſin, adultery, murther, &c. when the poor conſcience is now upon the Rack, he ſhall feel a Hell for the preſent, he ſhall find his mouth ſtopped, ſo as where he could before praiſe God thankfully and comfortably, and call on his Name, yea, he would be a means to ſtir up others; yet after the committing of ſin, and accuſing of conſcience, he ſhall find his lips tied up, and his mouth ſtopped for the preſent time: no power nor will to praiſe Almighty God, no, but this will ſound often and loud in thy ears; Pſ. 6. 51. *What haſt thou to do to declare my Ordinance, and to take my name into thy mouth?* So that a poor ſinner in diſtreſs, and feeling the conſcience to accuſe for ſome ſin, and fearing God's diſpleaſure, ſhall fear even

to

to name and mention the name of the Almighty.

Seeing this is the woful and bitter fruit of ſin, againſt knowledge and conſcience, even to ſtop our mouthes, and to tie up our tongues, ſo as we ſhall not be able once to open our lips to praiſe God with comfort; how ſhould this make us exceeding afraid of ſin, to commit it, to be afraid of offending God, and wounding our conſciences, ſo as we ſhall not dare to mention the name of God. We ſee, they which be near to the King, or great perſons, if they know any thing that offend them, ſo as they ſhall not endure in their preſence, they will be careful to ſhun and avoid it. Well, ſin is of that nature, that it will make us afraid once to mention the Name of God, but with reverence, and aſhamed to come before him, and quake to call upon him. *Uſe* 1.

If thou canſt now call upon God with comfort, and praiſe him cheerfully with peace of conſcience; O make much of it, and take heed of ſin and *Uſe* 2.

and disobedience, for that will be a means to stop the mouth of thy conscience, and cause thee that thou shalt not be able to open thy mouth to praise thee Lord.

Use 3. We see here, that all the praises that ungodly men offer unto God, they be but as desperate songs of a condemned man; as if one arraigned and condemned of Treason, should sing and make himself merry when he is at deaths door, it is but mad mirth. Jam. 4. *Is any man merry, let him sing Psalms; is any sad, let him pray.* So then, seeing wicked men live in sin, and in danger of God's vengeance, hell and damnation, it were better for them to weep, and to wring their Jam. 4. 9. hands, as *howl and weep ye rich men.* So if ungodly men knew all, and saw God's vengeance hanging over them, hell-fire gaping for them, and the Devil leading them blind-fold to the place of perdition, they would change all their mirth into lamentation and mourning; for so long as thou livest in sin, without assurance of God's mercy in Christ, alas, thou hast

holt no power to open thy lips, or to move thy tongue to praiſe the Lord.

If *David* could not of himſelf open his mouth to praiſe God, but the Lord muſt unlock them by the key of the Spirit, and put his finger into his mouth, and ſay, *Ephata*; hence we learn, That it is not in the power of man to keep the Law of God, to merit heaven and ſalvation by his own goodneſs and deſerts. For if a man have not in his power, ſo much as to open his lips, how much leſs to perform the Law, and ſo to merit heaven and ſalvation? No, a man cannot of himſelf think a good thought, but the Lord muſt cauſe both the will and the deed. *Doct.* 2. No ability in man to perform any good.

It ſerves to pull down the pride of men's hearts; for by nature we are given to think well of our ſelves, to admire our own goodneſs and worthineſs, and our own gifts, as if we could perform great matters: and yet (alas) we are not able to open our lips, but by God's help: but if God have given thee any gift or power to do, or *Uſe* 1.

ſpeak well, be not proud of it; *What haſt thou that thou haſt not received?* Oh then, why art thou proud of it? Well, let us acknowledge whence we received all, and give God the glory.

Uſe 1. This condemns the erroneous doctrin of the Papiſts, who ſo much juſtifie man's free will and goodneſs, that he being but helped by grace a little, is able to keep the Law, yea, to merit ſalvation and life eternal. But if thou canſt not by thy own power ſo much as move thy lips, or open thy mouth, how can they with all their goodneſs keep the Law, and ſo merit ſalvation?

Uſe 2. Seeing the motion of the lips, and ſo of the whole body, is of God, and no man can ſpeak a word but by the power of God, nor ſay, *Chriſt is the Lord*, but by the power of the holy Ghoſt; yea, *In him we live, move and have our being*: O then, how ſhould we be moſt careful to ſpeak, and do, ſo as God hath glory: for unleſs the Lord give thee power, thou canſt not move thy finger, nor thy tongue, or once open thy lips, if

if thee Lord deny thee his favour, and with-hold his power, as in that wicked *Jeroboam*, when he would have ſlain the Prophet of God for crying out againſt his ſins, the Lord ſmote his hand that it withered, and he could not pull it in again. Well, let us all take heed how we uſe and abuſe our tongues, leſt the Lord in juſtice do make them cleave to the roof of our mouths for the ſame.

2. Part of the verſe.

The ſecond part of the verſe contains a ſolemn proteſtation of *David*, that if the Lord ſhall thus ſhew him mercy, in pardoning his ſin, and receiving him into favour again, that then he will be moſt willing and ready to praiſe God, and to publiſh his mercy and goodneſs, whereby the Lord ſhall reap much glory.

Doct. 3. Thankſgiving a neceſſary duty.

Hereby we ſee, what it is that God requires at our hands, for all the mercies he beſtows upon us, namely, praiſe and thankſgiving, that we ſhould ſpeak of God's mercies, ſeek to honour him, and to be thankful for his bleſſings. This *David* ſhews

Pſ. 116. more plainly, *What ſhall I give unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.* Where he ſhews, that all that God looks for at our hands is praiſe and thankſgiving. So the Lord himſelf having rehearſed his great bleſſings unto his people, ſaith Deut. 10. 12. thus, *O Iſrael, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear him, to love him, and to walk in his ways?* where he ſhews wherein ſtands our true thankfulneſs, namely, not onely in word to acknowledge his mercy, but in life to fear him, love him, call upon him, truſt in him, and keep his commandments.

Uſe 1. Seeing this is all the Lord requires for his great and continual bleſſings and mercies, for our ſouls and bodies, namely, thankfulneſs, acknowledging his love and mercy, and praiſing him for the ſame, let us labour with our own hearts to give the Lord praiſe, to acknowledge his mercy and goodneſs beſtowed upon us: Pſ. 103. *It is a comely thing to be thankful.*

And

And that we may the better be ſtirred up to perform this worthy duty of praiſing God, let us conſider both the greatneſs and continuance of God's bleſſings beſtowed upon us, as *David* did, *Forget not all his benefits, who gave thee pardon of thy ſins, &c.* Pſ. 33. 1. So let us bethink our ſelves of God's love and mercy to us: Firſt, in electing us to be the ſons of God, in delivering us from hell and damnation, in redeeming us by the death and bloud-ſhedding of his own Son, in preſerving us from ſo many dangers, in feeding us, and clothing us, and all the reſt of his bleſſings for this life, and that which is to come. O if we could thus bethink our ſelves of the number, greatneſs and continuance of God's mercies, how could we be ſo unkind to forget, or to be unthankful for his bleſſings? We ſee, if a friend do us a pleaſure, though it be but a meals meat, we will be thankful for it, relate of it: but if he ſhall be a means to ſave our life, as from ſword, fire, water, and the like; O then we will go on our hands and

knees to do him good. Well, God is our beſt friend, and we are moſt beholden unto him, yea, more then to all the world; and therefore let us labour with our own hearts to be thankful: and becauſe many can purpoſe to give God thanks in words and with their lips, let us know it is not enough in words to praiſe God, and ſay, *Thanks be to God*; but we muſt labour in life to ſhew our thankfulneſs, when as we labour to honour God, when as we ſeek to do his will, and to ſerve him, and are loth to offend ſo merciful and bountiful a God. For if a man ſhall make ſhew in words that he is grateful, and yet live in ſin, there is no thankful heart in him. And that we may the better be ſtirred up to do this, let us know there is no better way to move the Lord to continue his love and mercy unto us, then when we do freely acknowledge his mercy, and are thankful for it; as we ſee, if we give a ſmall thing to a poor body, if they be thankful, to ſpeak of it, and to confeſs it, it will provoke us to do them great

great favours, and say, alas, he is thankful, it is well bestowed on him, he is worthy of a better turn: So as to be thankful for one good turn is to crave another. And therefore let us remember this duty, it is comely, it is all the Lord requires of us, and is the way to procure a new mercy at God's hands.

Let us then take heed of that foul fault of unthankfulness, when as men can be content to devour God's mercies from day to day, and never render him any thanks; like the Sow under the Tree, eats the Acorns, and never looks whence they come: so many wicked men devour the mercies of God, and never open their mouthes; like unto the nine Lepers, whereof not one returned back to praise God. *Use 2.* Luke 17.

The causes of unthankfulness: First, men consider not the greatness, number and continuance of God's mercies, and therefore they imagine themselves more beholden to a natural man for a meals meat, then to God for all his mercies. Causes of unthankfulness.

Pſ. 103. 2.

Secondly, forgetfulneſs of his mercies, when men let them paſs away, and never be affected with them.

Thirdly, the hardneſs of man's heart, which is not touched nor affected with the great bleſſings of God.

Well, let us beware of this ſin, which is ſo odious, that the Heathen men would rather be accuſed of any ſin, then this ſin of ungratefulneſs.

Secondly, by ungratefulneſs we deprive our ſelves of many other mercies; for as gratefulneſs for an old is the beginning of a new, ſo ungratefulneſs for an old favour is the next way to deprive us of a new.

VERSE XVI.

For thou deſireſt no ſacrifice, elſe would I give it thee, &c.

THe Prophet *David* having profeſſed that it was his earneſt deſire to honour God, to praiſe him, and ſeek his glory; confeſſeth that he hath no other means but to ſpeak of his mercy, and to be willing to ſet forth the ſame:

To

To become a preacher of his righteousnes and goodnes. And he confesseth (to his comfort) that the Lord is more delighted with this, then with all those external ceremonies and sacrifices which the people of the *Jews* did offer, and thought by them to please God, and to asswage his anger, and procure pardon of their sins thereby.

So that the main scope of these two verses is this, to shew *David*, though he had nothing in the world to requite the Lord's mercy unto him, yet he persuaded himself, upon his true repentance, the Lord will accept of his earnest desire to honour him, and to set forth his praise.

In the 16 verse he shews what are those sacrifices which the Lord cares not for, and desireth not outward sacrifices alone, which men offer without faith and repentance, and whereby they think to appease his anger, and merit pardon of their sins by the same.

In the 17 verse he shews what are the best sacrifices we can offer unto

God, which he will accept of for Christ's sake, and wherewith he is well pleased: *A broken and contrite heart*, truly wounded and humbled for sin, and which doth by faith embrace Jesus Christ, who alone is the propitiatory Sacrifice to appease his Father's anger, and to work our atonement and reconciliation with God.

Thou desirest no sacrifice.

Sacrifices of the Jews of two sorts.

THe Sacrifices of the *Jews* were of two sorts, some propitiatory, to procure favour at God's hands for the pardon of sin; some gratulatory, which were onely for thanksgiving for blessings received. Now of these *David* speaks here especially.

And of Sacrifices for thanksgiving were two sorts, some were called Sacrifices, as the first word signifies, where some Beast was slain and offered in Sacrifice to God.

Again, some were called Burnt-offerings, which were all consumed and turned into ashes, and they were called so, because the smoke of them ascended up to heaven: and both of them

them were figures of Christ Jesus, who should be slain and burned, as it were, in the fire of God's anger for our sins.

Quest. But how can the Lord be said not to desire burnt-offerings and sacrifices, seeing he commanded them in his Law?

Answ. We may not think the Prophet speaks here simply, that the Lord cares not for Sacrifices: for as yet the Ceremonies of the Law were in force, and the greatest parts of God's worship stood in Sacrifices; and *David* himself, and *Solomon* were diligent, and not sparing in performing this duty.

But we must know, *David* speaks here, first, that the Lord careth not for Sacrifices as they were done of the common people of the *Jews*, because that whereas the Lord did ordain them as helps to lead them to Christ, that they might deny themselves, and see they were worthy to die when the Beast was slain; so they might see to be saved by the everlasting Sacrifice of Christ alone. But they

begin

began to imagine that by their very offering of beasts in Sacrifice, God was pleased, never looking to Christ Jesus, whereof they are but types and figures.

Jer. 7. Secondly, because the people of the Jews did offer them without faith and repentance, with impenitent hearts; and thought so long as they offered sacrifice, though they lived in sin, it skilled not.

Thirdly, the Lord delights not, nor is so well pleased with this outward sacrifice, as with a broken and contrite, when this is humbled and mourns for sin, believes in Christ Jesus, and is careful to honour God by his holy life.

Doct. 6 A man's person must first be approved before his sacrifice be accepted. Jer. 24. 20 Ps. 29. 13 Mat. 15. Seeing *David* affirmeth, that God cares not for outward sacrifice when the inward is wanting, we learn, That though a man should perform all the outward service and worship of God, and that in never so glorious a manner, yet if the heart be not affected and purified, all is in vain, the Lord cares not for it; as to preach the Word, to hear it, to receive the Sacrament,

ment, &c. If there be not a broken heart for ſin, a repentant heart, a ſanctified heart, all is but vain. The Scribes and Phariſees ſeemed marvellous preciſe in outward ſhew, very zealous and forward; yet their hearts were puffed up with pride, ſelf-love, malice, covetouſneſs, &c. And therefore Chriſt ſaith, *Unleſs your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Mat. 5. 10 *Judas* in outward ſhew preached and prayed as well as others, yet a very devil, a moſt traiterous wretch, full of hypocriſie, covetouſneſs, and bloudy cruelty. Well, we ſee, though men make never ſo good and fair a ſhew, yet if the heart be not ſound, all is in vain, and from the teeth outward, and God cares not for it, he eſteems as much of their ſacrifices, as if they ſhould kill a man, or ſacrifice a dog, which is abomination to the Lord. Eſ. 66. 3.

This may ſerve to cut the combs of all thoſe which be proud hypocrites, and all they do is in outward appearance: alas, their praying, preach- *Uſe* 1.

Pr. 26. 9. Pſ. 50. 16

preaching, hearing, it is but ſwines bloud, dogs bloud, a beautiful abhomination: and therefore let us never content our ſelves with the outward worſhip and ſervice of God, but let us labour to do all in truth, with faith, obedience, repentance, humiliation and good conſcience.

Uſe 2.

This condemns all the blind devotions of ignorant and prophane ſinners, who think that ſo long as they offer their outward Sacrifices, come to Church, hear the Word, receive the Sacrament, &c. they may live in ſin, and yet pleaſe God. And this was the very cauſe why the Lord abhorred the *Jews* Sacrifices. And may not the Lord even now abhor our Sacrifices, our coming to Church, hearing, praying, &c. ſeeing men do content themſelves with outward actions, and come with ſinful hearts and affections.

Eſ. 1. 11, 12, 13. Jer. 7. 8.

Doct. 2. A man may perform a good duty, and yet ſin in the manner of doing it.

We learn hence, that a man may perform duties which God hath commanded, and yet not pleaſe God, but ſin moſt grievouſly in doing of them. To offer Sacrifice, it is God's

own

own commandment, but when people shall do it in an evil manner, either without faith and repentance, or else to an evil end, to merit at God's hands; then it maketh that which God commands to be a sin to them, not in it self, but to them that fail in the manner of doing it. To offer Sacrifice was the commandment of God, but when the *Jews* thought by their Sacrifices to appease God's anger, without the Sacrifice of Christ, they sinned, and God abhorred them, and cared not for them. Again, to preach the word of God is his commandment, but when *Judas* shall preach the word to hide his covetousness and treacherous heart, it is a sin in *Judas*. To give our alms, it is a thing commanded, and a sacrifice wherewith God is well pleased; but if men shall give to merit, and to be seen of men, the Lord careth not for it. So as we see a man may do things which God commands men to do, and yet be so far from pleasing God, that they shall sin and provoke him to anger, because they do them not in an holy

Prov. 15. 11.

holy order, in faith, repentance, obedience, and zeal of the Lord's glory.

Use 1.

This condemns almost the whole service of God amongst the Papists, who do all to this end, to merit and deserve at God's hands pardon for sin, and freedom from punishment; but this is to a wrong end: we must do good deeds, not to merit, but to honour God, to give good example, and to make our calling sure to our selves.

Use 2.

This must admonish us all, not onely to do what God commands, as to preach the Word, hear, pray, receive the Sacrament, &c. but to do it as God commands, or else he abhors all we do, unless we do them in faith, repentance and obedience, all is in vain.

Doct. Popish sacrifices abominable.

If the Lord abhors those sacrifices which he commands for man's offence, how much more those sinful sacrifices which have been invented by man, without any warrant from his Word, as the Idol of the Mass, Popish Pilgrims, perpetual chastity, voluntary poverty, living in a Cloister, &c.

Well

Well then, let us take heed, not onely that we do not abuse those Sacrifices which the Lord commands, by our evil doing and performing of them; but much more, that we be not so bold at any time, to offer unto the Lord such Sacrifices as are condemned in the word of God, to offer with strange fire, as *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and such as *Paul* calls *Will-worship*, and Christ calls *The invention of man*; for these the Lord abhors. *Use* 1.

It condemns that bloudy and beastly sacrifice of the Papists, who offer in Mass Christ daily for the quick and dead, an horrible abuse of Christ Jesus: For Christ hath by his own sufficient sacrifice of his body and bloud on the Cross, appeased his Father's anger for the sins of the world, and put an end to all those sacrifices; and if they offer up Christ in the Mass for quick and dead, then Christ's sacrifice was imperfect, that must be patched up with that abhominable Idol. *Use* 2.

Concerning those sacrifices which were lambs, sheep, goats or bullocks, and

and were all slain and offered to God in fire, let us mark, that they were all so many figures, types and shapes of that everlasting Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he offered upon the Cross in his own person.

Doct. 4. Christian end of all other sacrifices.

Then this doth commend unto us that blessed and most meritorious sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God, seeing there were so many prophesies of it, even from the beginning of the world, and so many shadows and types of it, as cannot be numbred, because there never passed one day amongst the *Jews*, from the time of the Law till Christ's coming, but they offered at least Morning and Evening Sacrifice, as shadows of Christ Jesus to come; and the people of God, the believing *Jews*, and holy Fathers and Prophets, did in them behold Jesus Christ, as slain and crucified before their eyes. And as Christ saith, *The holy Patriarchs and Prophets, and famous Kings, desired to see my day, and would be glad to see, and yet saw it not.*

Use 1.

Well, seeing the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

Christ is so excellent and meritorious, of endless worth to procure God's favour to us, how often should we think upon it, never let it depart out of our minds? And to this end we should be more willing to approach and come to the Supper of the Lord, that so there, as it were in a plain Table and Picture, and not painted on a wooden Cross, as the Papists do, we might behold Christ crucified, and his bloud shed for our sins, so often as we see the Bread broken, the Wine poured out: *So often as ye do it, do it in remembrance of me, to shew forth my death till I come.* 1 Cor. 11

For the remembrance of Christ's Sacrifice it is a sweet comfort to all wounded and distressed souls; it is Sack and Sugar to all them that truly believe in him: it is an excellent means to kill sin, and to humble our hard hearts, that we should remember, our sins were as the bloudy nails and the spear which put him to death; and a powerful bridle to restrain us from sin, because so often as we sin, we do as it were pierce his heart

heart afreſh: and as for thoſe that care not for coming to the Sacrament, nor yet for the Word, wherein Chriſt is lively crucified, they ſhew they have no benefit by this Sacrifice of Chriſt.

VERSE XVII.

The ſacrifices of God are a contrite ſpirit. A contrite and broken heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.

DAvid having ſhewed what be thoſe Sacrifices wherein the Lord hath no pleaſure, namely, ſuch as men ſhall offer with hope to merit, or without faith or repentrnce.

Now he ſhews what is the Sacrifice wherein the Lord takes great delight, and is well pleaſed, and that is in one word, *a broken ſpirit, a heart truly wounded for ſin.*

In this ſame verſe let us firſt find out what is the broken and contrite ſpirit. Secondly, the commendations of it, namely, it is called the *Sacrifice* of

of God. Thirdly, that *he doth not despise.*

By a broken and contrite spirit is meant, such an heart as is truly humbled with the sight of sin, wounded and pierced with the fear of God's anger, grieved for offending so merciful a God, and loving a Father, and doth beg for mercy at his hands as for life and death; besides the endless mercy of God in Christ our Saviour, which breaketh the heart of a poor sinner.

So then, there be two things that wound and bruise the hearts of sinners; first, the sight of sin, and knowledge of our misery by reason thereof. Secondly, the endless mercy of God in Christ, so as it cuts us at the heart to remember that we have offended so good and merciful a Father.

Doct. 1. Broken heart, a most rare thing to be found.

Seeing this is that broken heart, which is thus bruised with the sight of sin, and is humbled for them; yea, hath a most low conceit of it self as most vile and unworthy; we shall see that it is a most rare thing to be found

found; for generally men are so blinded with self-love, that they see nothing, or feel nothing to humble them, or bruise their stony hearts, but are like the Church of *Ephesus*. For this is ever a fellow of hardness of heart, and cause of all ignorance of our misery. Men are like those that be sick of a Lethargy, it is a deadly disease, and incurable. This hardness of heart it is the common judgment of God upon our people, it reigns every where. How often hath God knockt at the doors of our eyes by his judgments? at the doors of our ears by his justice? at the doors of our heart by his word and commandments? and we will not turn to him by our repentance; which if we do not, he then will turn us into hell for our forgetfulness. Nor must we have qualms of fits, or when we are offered time of piety and repentance, like a weather-cock turn to sin again, and be never at a certain, lest we should be condemned for ever to hell for our inconstancy; there-

Rev. 3. 14. Eph. 4. 18.

therefore let us beseech the Lord that the time to come may be a time for our repentance for our sins past.

Seeing that this contrite heart is so rare and hard to be found, and the hard heart is so common, and so dangerous a fore-runner of Hell, O let us look to our selves how we find our hearts broken and bruised with the sense of our sins, mourn for them, and bewail them. Alas, it is wonderful to see poor souls, how men lie in sin, see nothing, and fear nothing, nor complain of nothing: Men can complain of the stone in the reins, and cry out with grief, but no man complains of the stone in the heart, they feel no such grief, though it be deadly and dangerous: And if thou findest thy heart hardned, so as thou art not touched and troubled with the sight of sin, of God's vengeance, of hell and damnation, that thou canst not mourn for them, that thou feareſt not God's judgments, and are not affected with his mercies to mourn for thy sins:

Oh

O know thy eſtate is fearful and miſerable, thou art in extreme danger to periſh, and be damned for ever.

Seeing a hard heart is ſo fearful a judgment of God, and fore-runner of hell; let us uſe all good means for the bruiſing of the heart, and to this end we muſt labour to know the Law of God, how we break it daily in thought, word and deed; we muſt know the curſe of God due to ſin, that *the wages of ſin is death.* And becauſe the preaching of the Word is the moſt excellent means to work this, and is the Lord's hammer to cruſh in pieces our ſtony heart, let us attend that. And laſtly, let us make much of God's mercy in Chriſt, that ſo his mercy, patience, long-ſuffering, &c. may be a ſpecial means to bruiſe our hearts that we have ſinned againſt him.

Ro. 2. 12.
Pſ. 40. 12.

Uſe 3. Let us take heed of pride of heart, to think too well of our ſelves; for this is certain, where men and women think too well of themſelves, there is hardneſs of heart, and where hardneſs of heart is, there is pride of heart, for

for theſe two go not aſunder, and the more proud, the more hard-hearted, and the more hard-hearted the more proud; and therefore if thy heart be humbled indeed, bruiſed for ſin, there will follow a very low and baſe eſtimation of our ſelves, to think more baſely and meanly of our ſelves then any man can do. 1 Tim. 1. 15.

The ſecond point is the praiſe and commendation of ſuch a ſacrifice: namely, that the Prophet doth not onely call it the ſacrifice of God, that is, moſt excellent, and ſuch as God loves and likes, but alſo he calls it ſacrifices, in the plural number, *The ſacrifices of God*; for it is not in vain that he ſpeaks in the plural number, and the meaning is this, to ſhew that a heart broken and bruiſed for ſins is in ſtead of all other ſacrifices whatſoever; and let men offer what ſacrifice they will, never ſo many, coſtly or excellent, yet if this be wanting, it is but in vain, God eſteems not of it; one broken heart is more worth then a thouſand ſacrifices of great price.

Instruct.

THis may admoniſh every one to take heed that we do not offer nor preſent the Lord with any other ſacrifice but this, which is in ſtead of all, and more worth then a thouſand offered by hard-hearted ſinners, which are no better then hypocrites and diſſemblers with God, which make a fair outward ſhew, and come like *Judas*, ſaying, *Hail, Maſter*, onely to betray him and undo their own ſouls, both in this life and in the world to come. For if a man offer many ſacrifices, pray much, preach much, hear much, receive the Sacrament often; yet if the heart be not broken, humbled and bruiſed, alas, all is in vain, God eſteems them as of no effect, we cannot pleaſe him without a broken and contrite ſpirit.

Secondly, wouldſt thou offer unto God a moſt precious ſacrifice, that might be inſtead of all the reſt, and make all the reſt acceptable? O then preſent him with this broken heart. The poor woman that caſt into

to

to the Treasury but two mites, cast in more then all the rest, because it came from a heart truly humbled; and so if thou wouldest have thy praying, preaching, hearing, &c. please God, then present the Lord with a broken heart, which is in stead of all other sacrifices, and makes them all acceptable; and without this, all is abhominable unto the Lord.

Thou wilt not despise.

THat is, thou dost love, and like, and art well pleased with it, that is, with a broken heart and contrite spirit.

Doct. 2. God doth highly esteem of a broken heart. 2 Kings 22. 19. Luke 19. Esa. 66. Ps. 57. 5.

Hence we learn, That God doth well and highly esteem of, and love that man or woman which is of a broken and contrite heart; like *Josias*, whose heart is melted; when as the heart is broken with sight of sin, and sense of God's anger, and withall doth embrace Jesus Christ for pardon and forgiveness.

Use 1.

Here is matter of endless comfort to poor distressed souls, whose hearts are wounded and bruised for sins, melt and mourn for them, feel

the burthen of them, and bewail them; thou art dear unto God, he loves thee, and likes thee, and hath reſpect unto thee, and he will comfort thee, and deliver thee. Look on *Joſias*, that godly King, on the poor Publican, on *Mary Magdalen*, on the *Canaanitiſh* woman, and on every child of God, how the Lord hath refreſhed them in their diſtreſs.

Seeing the Lord doth not deſpiſe a broken and contrite ſpirit, a diſtreſſed ſoul and wounded conſcience, he will not break the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoaking flax; then let no man or woman that is of a contrite ſpirit be out of heart, as though the Lord hated them, and regarded them not; no, no, let them rather know that the Lord loves them, and likes them, that they are dear unto him. It is a wonderful comfort to God's poor children, Oh! they find and feel the heavy weight of ſin, and groan under it, ſo as they think the Lord loves them not, but rather hates them; truly it is not ſo, the Lord loves them, and they are more

more dear unto him. It is not a voluntary Pilgrimage, nor a bald head, nor onely beating the breast will serve the turn; no, it must be sorrow and grief, a contrite and an humble spirit that the Lord doth accept of, and those are they which the Lord will not despise: as, *Esa.* 57. 13. God himself saith, *He will dwell in the humble and meek spirit, and will raise up that soul which is cast down, &c.* Ps. 33. 1.

VERSE XVIII, XIX.

Be favourable unto Sion for thy good pleasure: build up the Walls of Jerusalem.

Then shalt thou accept the sacrifice of righteousness, even the burnt-offering and oblation: then shall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.

The second part of the Psalm, containing a Prayer for the Church.

HItherto we have heard of the first part of this worthy Psalm, wherein *David* hath put up sundry petitions and requests unto God, for the pardon of his sins, & turning away his fearful judgments.

Now in theſe two laſt verſes *David* is mindful of the Church and people of God, and becauſe he had by his ſins not onely endangered his own ſoul, but alſo laid open the Church and people of God to great miſery, and done what lay in him (as he was a King and Judge of the Land) to draw the curſe and judgment of God upon them: therefore he doth humbly intreat the Lord to be merciful to his Church, and not to plague and puniſh them, as he might have done, both for his ſins and diſobedience.

Theſe two verſes contain in them two ſpecial points to be conſidered of us.

Firſt, the Requeſt which *David* makes in behalf of the Church and people of God, *verſe* 18.

Secondly, the Reaſon taken from the vow and proteſtation which *David* and the people make unto God, namely, to offer unto God the ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving.

In the Prayer be two Requeſts: firſt, he prays for mercy and favour to

to be shewed unto the Church of God.

Secondly, that the Lord would repair that breach which he had made by his sins.

Be favourable.

THat is, Do well, bless, preserve and shew mercy to *Sion*. *Sion* signifies that beautiful Temple of *Jerusalem*, but here it is taken for the Church and people of God; as if he should say, O Lord, I do not onely intreat thee that thou wouldest have mercy upon me, but I beseech thee shew mercy to thy whole Church and people, who were plagued for *David*'s sin. For you may read in the second Book of *Samuel*, when he saw the plague, he cried out, *O Lord, what have these sheep done? lay the punishment upon me, and upon my father's house, rather then upon them, for they have done nothing.* Therefore he desires the Lord to be merciful unto them, that his Word may be preached and his Name called upon: for I acknowledge, O Lord, that I have done, as much as lay in my

power to bring heavy judgments upon thy Church and people, if any sins be laid upon them. But, Lord, let not thy Spouse be punished for my sin; *O be favourable unto Sion.*

Doct. 1. Prayer the chiefest refuge in the time of danger.

Seeing *David* in time of misery, when the Church was in great danger of God's judgments, betakes himself to prayer, to intreat the Lord for grace and favour, we learn hence, That this is our chiefest refuge and shelter in time of misery and affliction, when the Church of God is in danger of any judgement or calamity, even to betake our selves to humble and earnest prayer. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.* It is a great blessing for a Kingdom to enjoy peace, for peace on earth makes it like to heaven. And of the *Israelites* it is reported, that they cried five times for peace unto the Lord in their distress. So in *Egypt* they cried unto the Lord; so they fasted and prayed when *Haman* had got the King's Letter to put the Jews to death.

Psl. 122. Psl. 60. Psl. 107. Hest 1. 8. Esa. 64. 2 Chr. 32

The like we may see in *Nehemiah*,

Nehem.

Nehem. 1. 3. when he heard that the people returned from captivity, were ſtill in miſery, *Jeruſalem* troden down; he ſate down and wept, he mourned, faſted and prayed before the Lord God of heaven for the redreſs of thoſe evils. This appeareth likewiſe, *Pſal.* 137. 1, 2, 3. where the Prophet layeth plainly down the miſerable eſtate of the Church under the *Babylonians*, and the afflictions of the Church conceived upon that diſtreſs: *We ſate down and wept when we remembred thee, O Sion. If I forget thee (O Jeruſalem) let my right hand forget her cunning; yea, if I prefer not thee, Jeruſalem, before my chief ſt joy.*

And in the firſt of *Samuel*. 4 19 it is noted unto the everlaſting praiſe of the wife of *Phineas*, that when the *Philiſtins* prevailed over the people of God, and one trouble came upon her on the neck of another, as the taking of the Ark, the fall of her father, the death of her huſband, and the overthrow of the Hoſt, &c. yet above all, the report of taking the Ark of the Lord, it was a

wound unto her ſoul, haſtned her travel, and called her child *Ichabod*, that is, *no glory*, or *the glory is departed from Iſrael, becauſe the Ark was taken.*

Uſe 1. Well, if the Lord ſhould afflict us, and ſhould threaten to deſtroy us, to remove the Goſpel, to take away his zealous and faithful Miniſters, to make the golden Bells of *Aaron* yield no ſound; what are we to do? Namely, this muſt be our refuge, we muſt fly unto God by true and hearty prayer, bewail our ſins, acknowledge and truly confeſs them to God, ply the Lord with prayers and tears, for

Jam. 5. the prayer of a righteous man is of endleſs force. Now if the prayer of one righteous man be of that force and ſtrength, how much more available are the prayers of hundreds or thouſands, that are gathered together in one? One cord may eaſily be broken, but a three-fold cord cannot eaſily be broken. *Elias* is called the chariot and horſemen of *Iſrael*, becauſe by faithful prayers which he had made unto God, he could do more for the defence of God's holy Church.

Church, then an army of Souldiers.

Seeing the troubles of others muſt move pity on our ſelves, then woe unto them that are ſecure, that laugh when the Church weepeth, that live in bravery, when as the Church is in ſackcloth and aſhes; that feaſt, when the Church do faſt. This was the practiſe of thoſe that lived in the time of *Eſay, ch.* 22. 12, 13, 14. *In that day did the Lord of hoſts call unto weeping and mourning, to baldneſs and girding with ſackcloth: and behold, joy and gladneſs, ſlaying of oxen, and killing of ſheep, eating fleſh and drinking, for to morrow we ſhall die.*

Hereunto accordeth that of the Prophet *Amos, Amos* 6. *Wo to them that are at eaſe in Sion, &c.* where we ſee he pronounceth the woful eſtate and condition of thoſe who lived without regard of the judgments of God laid upon the Church. And certainly the times wherein we live do call upon us to the practiſe of this heavenly and chriſtian duty.

But much more are they condemned.

ned, that are so far from pitying the Church's troubles, that rather (without all natural affection, as if they were born of Wolves, or nourished of Tygers) seek to cut the throat of the Church, adde unto her afflictions, and make the burthen heavier, even of them that are ready to fall. This doth the Prophet speak of such, *Ps.* 96. 20. *They persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and add unto the sorrow of them whom thou hast wounded.*

Doct. 4 Prayer for the Church, a Christian duty.

In that the Prophet *David* doth not pray for himself alone but is mindful of the whole Church and people of God, and therefore prays for them, that God would bless them, and defend them: Hence we do observe, That it is the duty of every Christian man and woman, that be true members of the Church of God, not onely to pray for themselves, but also to pray unceasantly for the Church of God, that God would be favourable to his people, bless his children, and seek the welfare of God's Church.

This we may see by the exampl'e

of

of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18. who prayed for the *Sodomites*, that they might be spared. This we may see in *Nehemiah*, *Nehem.* 1. 4. who mourned, fasted and prayed unto the God of Heaven, when he saw that the Church was in misery. And this affection was in *David*, when he saith, *Ps* 137. *we sate down and wept when we remembred thee, O Sion.* And when the people desired *Samuel* to pray for them, 1 *Sam.* 12. 23. he said, *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, and cease praying for you.* This *Paul* performed to the *Romans*, *Rom.* 1. 9. 10. *God is my witness (whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of his Son) that without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers.* We must pray at all times, and in all places; in the Egyptian Palace with *Joseph*, in the Babylonish Court with *Isaiah*, in the Whales belly with *Jonas*, on the solitary Mount with our Saviour, with *Peter* in prison, with *Paul* on the Seashore, and with *Silas* in the stocks. And therefore let us pray (my beloved) with unfeigned hearts, and with elevated

elevated ſpirits, that our devotions may mount the Heavens, to God the Father, for the peace of *Jeruſalem*; and for our reward, it is here promiſed to thoſe that do it, that they ſhall proſper.

So that we ſee here it hath been the practiſe of the Church and the people of God, to pray for the Church of God, and that indeed for ſundry reaſons.

Firſt, it is God's commandment, that we ſhould pray for the Church
Pſ.122. of God; *Pray for the Church or peace of Jeruſalem*, that is, for the good and flouriſhing eſtate of God's Church and people.

Secondly, as it is God's commandment, ſo it is for our own good, becauſe we ſhall fare the better for the common good of God's Church: *They ſhall proſper that love thee.*

Thirdly, we are or ſhould be members of the Church of God, whereof Chriſt is the onely head. Now then, members of one and the ſame body ſhould procure the good one of another; and therefore if it ſtill go ill

with

with the Church of God, it cannot go well with us.

How did *Moſes* plead with God Ex. 23.
ſundry times for his Church and people? So *Nehemia*, he faſted and praied for the Church in miſery, and for the City of his fathers, *Jeruſalem*.

And as it is the duty of all in general to pray, and procure the peace and proſperity of God's Church and his people; ſo eſpecially ought Kings and Magiſtrates, who are the Governours and Leaders of God's people, and his Lieutenants upon earth. Secondly, Miniſters are bound to pray for God's Church, and the peace of *Jeruſalem*, which is the object of our prayers.

Now there be three ſorts of peace which we muſt pray for: Firſt, the peace of Conſcience: Secondly, the peace of the World: Thirdly, the peace of Heaven. Now we may read in *Matthew*, how the Devils themſelves have a peace, for when Chriſt came and did appear to them, they cried out, *What have we to do with thee, O thou Jeſus, art thou come to torment us*

be

before our time? which shews they have some peace, though devils. Then there is a second peace, which is wished by all people, which was denounced at our Saviour's birth by the Angels, saying, *Peace on earth, and good will towards men.* But the chiefest peace that we must pray for, is the peace of heaven, where is comfort and diversity of pleasure: God is the Author of peace, because of his Majesty and of his glory. Thirdly, peace on earth, which is the preparation to happiness; and peace must be first obtained and had, before we can enter into glory: then peace and charity and hope will cease, but love and glory never shall have an end, but be permanent, and of eternal durance. This peace which *David* desires is for his own people, and for *Jerusalem*'s sake, that great City. *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, which is an act of charity: then it follows, *they shall prosper that love it*, there is the blessing promised to those which pray for the Church of *Jerusalem*.

For Sion's sake I will not hold my peace,

peace, and for Jeruſalem's ſake I will not reſt, until the righteouſneſs thereof break forth as the light, and the ſalvation thereof as a burning lamp. I have ſet a watchman upon thy walls, O Jeruſalem, which all the day and all night continually ſhall not ceaſe. Ye that are mindful of the Lord keep not ſilence. Verſ. 6.

If this be the duty of all men, to labour to procure the welfare and happineſs of God's Church and people: then moſt woful is the eſtate of all thoſe that hinder the true worſhip and ſervice of God, when wicked men (like to bloudy *Saul*) ſhall breath out threatnings and ſlaughter to the Church of God. Well, we ſhall read in the Word of God, as alſo in the Acts and Monuments, we ſhall ever find the end of Perſecutors to be exceeding horrible, and very fearful; ſome of them were ſtricken down with preſent death, ſome dying deſperately, and deſpairing of God's mercy, ſome run mad, and other the like fearful ends. Which might admoniſh all perſecuting Tyrants, and bloudy enemies of the Church, to *Uſe* 3. Act. 9. 1.

to alter and change their cruelties, and no more to persecute the poor Church and children of God, lest they be plagued in like manner.

Be favourable.

Doct. 3. Liberty of preaching one of God's favours.

THat is, so bless thy poor Spouse, that in it thy servants, the holy Prophets, may ever preach the sacred Word, that thy Worship and Service may sincerely be performed, and thy name called upon; the number of the Elect may be encreased, and many souls saved. Hence we learn, That it is the great favour and mercy of God to any Church or People, when the Word and Gospel of God is soundly and sincerely preached, and the Sacrament duly administred: when the people may with liberty and comfort come together to sanctifie God's Sabbath, to call on the Lord in his Sanctuary, to worship the Lord in his holy House.

And surely we do see here, what great cause we have to bless the holy Name of God in this Land, how gracious the Lord hath been unto us above all Nations that are round about us.

So on the contrary part, it is a great and grievous judgement of God to want faithful Miniſters and holy ſervants of God, when God ſhall cauſe the golden Bells of *Aaron* to ceaſe, it is a token of God's diſpleaſure with any People, Town, or Kingdom; then the Lord frowns upon them, and is exceeding angry with them: and then wo to that Nation or Country, when the Lord departs from them, when he ſhall take away their watchmen, when he ſhall deprive them of their faithful Miniſters, when he ſhall take away his Word and Goſpel. The Lord threatens this as the greateſt of all judgements; then comes in ſin, ignorance, prophaneneſs, impiety, idolatry, ſuperſtition, and all manner of ſin, till the Lord come with his judgments to deſtroy them. Amos 8. 11. Rev. 2.

Seeing it is ſo great a token of the Lord's diſfavour, of his anger and diſpleaſure againſt any Church or Kingdom, O then let us repent of our ſins, let us intreat the Lord not to bring this judgment upon us, but ra- *Uſe* 1.

rather to humble us by any other means, as it pleaseth his Majesty.

Use 2. This condemns a plain dotage, and foolish dream of ignorant persons: O (say some) it was never a good world since we had so much preaching; but in time of Popery, then all things were cheap. And so they gather by outward peace and tranquillity, that God loved them, and liked of them. But we see here, howsoever many poor souls may deceive themselves, it is a singular favour of God to people, when he gives them his Gospel to be truly preached and taught to them, when they may call upon him in publick and private, this is a special favour of God: but where this is wanting, *Where prophecyings fail, the people perish.* For where the Word of God is not preached, and the people taught, there they are ignorant, blind and prophane, and all manner of iniquity abounds, and where sin abounds, there the curse of God must needs hang over the heads of that people. For where the Word is not preached, and the people taught, though

Prov. 29.

though they abound in all prosperity, yet it is not so great a favour as they think it to be, nay, it may be a judgment unto them; for what are they the better to have peace and plenty, ease and liberty, when they want the favour of the Almighty? for every benefit is not a blessing.

According to thy good pleasure.

THese words contain the ground of his request, namely, the endless mercy and favour of God in Jesus Christ, not any goodness or worthiness of their own, of *David*, or the people; but he builds his faith and petition on God's meer mercy in Christ.

Doct. 4. Faith must not rest upon others merits.

Hence we learn, That we must build our faith, not upon any goodness, desert, or worthiness of our own, but upon the alone mercy and good pleasure of God. *Dan.* 9. he doth confess, it is true, that they dare not appear in their own name or worthiness, but onely in the mercy of God in Christ: *To us belongs shame and confusion of face; but, Lord, for thy tender mercies sake hear us.* Dan. 4.

When

When the Church of God was in great affliction, they acknowledge it the Lord's great mercy they were not consumed for their sins, *Because his compassions fail not.* So then, let us know that we must lay this ground of all our prayers, even on God's endless mercy in Christ, not our own worthiness.

Lam. 3. 22.

Use 1. This condemns all such pride as the Papists are guilty of, when they do lean so much upon their own merits, worthiness and deserts, and think God should hear them, and help them for the same; yea, they make Saints and Angels Mediators: whereas we must relie onely on God's mercy in Christ for all good things.

Use 2. Seeing *David* doth build his faith and prayer upon God's mercy alone, without any respect of his worthiness, or goodness of the people, we learn, in all our prayers to rely wholly on God's mercy, and not think that we are worthy to be heard for our own worthiness or deserts: no, no, let us confess and say, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name*

name be the glory: for we are not worthy of the least favour.

Many of us when we are at our prayers in the Church, be led away with a world of fancies, and mingle our devotions with the cares and thoughts of the world, and instead of lifting up our hearts and hands to God, to beg mercy and forgivness for our sins, we lift up our eyes to see what new fashions we can espy; and if not so, then we hold up our heads on high, thereby to shew our pride; or otherwise on our elbows, are sleeping in our pews or seats: but let me tell those that sleep in the House of God, in the time of Divine Service or Sermon, they are dead to God already, and the Preacher (may be supposed to be) preaching their Funeral Sermons. O let us take heed we be not overtaken with any of these infirmities, or if we are, or have been, let us strive earnestly and speedily to forsake them, lest we be suddenly taken away by the hand of death, as was *Herod* and *Ananias* &c. Therefore let us watch with the Lord one hou

Note.

Exhor.

hour by prayer, and especially upon his own day, and in his own house; for prayer is an antidote against all the poisonous darts and inticements of Satan, it elevates our thoughts and meditations on better things then ever we can here enjoy, it takes away our affections from the vain and momentary delights of this wicked world, and by the grace of God may be a means to strengthen us against the strongest assaults of Satan, to his utter ruine of us. For if Satan but once perceive that we begin to have but a thought of prayer, he then steals away presently, and dares not approach to attempt us. I can assure you, prayer is powerful, profitable, and delectable; powerful it is, for it is the key of God's Cabinet, which opens the blessings of God to man, it is a cure for all diseases, and a remedy against all dispairs; for in the depth of all our sorrows, nothing is so comfortable or profitable as prayer, steers and keeps the heart in the right way from many other inconveniencies, and evil imaginations, for our

our bodies are the cages of unclean birds, when indeed they ought to be the Temples of the holy Ghost: nor are the best of our actions but unjust, and our devotions onely eloquence of words, mingled with worldly cares and distracted thoughts. O let us remember this, that our consciences cannot die with us, nor yet die within us, but will arise and open it self at last, though our sins were never so secretly and closely kept or hid from the eyes of man, yet the All-seeing eye of God, by our own consciences shall witness against us. Therefore let us pray for a heart of repentance now in the time of grace, and under the Gospel. It was the saying of that old practioner of S. *Paul*, *Pray continually*, (saith he) and it should be our daily prayer, Lord, so strengthen us, that our prayers may be effectual before thee. To pray twice a day every man ought to do; this he may do, more he can do, less he cannot do. Let us therefore every morning sacrifice our first-born unto God, that is, our first thoughts; and in the

evening our last thoughts: our prayers do circumvent Satan's incursions. It is prayer which pleases God, and our prayers are as so many cords, which bind us to the horns of the Altar. O how many men can swear by their faith, which never pray by their faith; and when they go to bed and rise again, never acknowledge God's mercy to be renewed unto them, but like a dog shake their ears and so fall to drinking, and eating, and swearing. O that men were as full of getting grace, as many men are desirous to get wealth; but most men in these our sinful and latter days pray for riches, seek after lands, pursue honour and pleasure, projecting and beating their brains how to increase riches, which are the fading blossoms of this earth; whilst in the mean time (like the rich man in the Gospel) which had all things at his command, his barns full, one of corn, and the other of sin: but observe what became of him for all his riches, he went to bed, but he never awaked again, for that very night his soul

ſoul was taken from him. None of God's children we ever read of did ſo, their prayers were otherwiſe, it coſt them many ſighes and tears to have the knowledge of God, and of their ſins, thereby to ſubdue the corruptions of their bodies, and to have dominion over the world, and the inticements thereof. This was *David's* prayer and ſupplication to God, to pray him in his good time and pleaſure to build up the walls of *Jeruſalem*, that is, the breaches and diviſions of the Church, which was torn and rent by reaſon of his ſins. Prayer overcomes, but prayer was never overcome. *Hezekiah's* prayer ſhall prevail, *Elias* his deſires granted, the *Ninevites* repentance cauſed ſhowers of mercy, inſtead of vials of wrath: this makes us to have ſtrength and power, as further when we ſee, prayer ſtops the mouth of Lions, as it did when *Daniel* was flung into their Den: it is a *Samſon's* lock, which pulls the whole houſe upon the *Philiſtins* heads; it can make a priſon a palace, as it did to *Joſeph*; it can open

the prison door, as it did to *Peter*; it can divide the Sea, and make it like a wall on every side, as it did to the children of *Israel*. Prayer, I say, is a messenger of God, it drives away the enemy of our souls; nay, it will subdue our bodily enemies, and mollifie their hard hearts. Prayer doth remove the poison of sin from our souls, and it brings all true joy and comfort to our hearts; it is better then either Oyl or Wine, though with abundance of increase. Therefore, I say, he that will rejoyce continually, let him pray without ceasing, that is, as often as he hath opportunity, or at least twice a day; for prayer will be no hinderance to any man, no more then a man that is in a journey, and doth alight to refresh himself, or to mend what is amiss. If thou answerest and sayest, thou shalt lose a customer, I will tell thee, thou shalt get grace and favour of God; if thou hindrest thy self in the sale of thy goods and trade, thou shalt get knowledge, and with *Mary* in the Gospel, chuse the better part, and re-

receive the greater glory, &c.

O let us ſpare ſome time in the morning to pray to our God, and let us entertain with cheerfulneſs ſuch a cuſtom into our hearts; we have not ſo great a task impoſed upon us, as to take all the pains for our bodies, and none for our ſouls; unhappy ſhall he be for ever who preſers his Mammon before his God. He that to keep his body ſhall ſell his ſoul, ſhall, when too late, repent ſo unhappy departure. How fearful a change ſhall he make, who to gain an applauſe on Earth, ſhall loſe a reward in Heaven; let us not deceive our ſelves, onely he ſhall receive a crown in Heaven, who hath been a faithful ſervant on Earth. Who ſo doth truly endeavour to be of the Church militant, ſhall undoubtedly have a part in the Church triumphant: if we ſhall follow the works of grace here, we ſhal never go without the works of glory hereafter. And ſo I come now to the ſecond part of the verſe, which is *David's* earneſt requeſt and prayer to God, *And build up the walls of Jeruſalem, &c.*

And build up the walls of Jeruſalem

The ſecond part of the verſe.

THis is the ſecond part of the verſe, wherein he intreats the Lord not to hinder the building or erecting of his Temple for his ſake, but rather to inlarge and make up that ſame breach which he had broken down by his foul and bloudy ſins. As if he ſhould ſay, O Lord, I have by my ſins done what lies in my power to hinder thy Church, and to pluck down the wall of thy protection, yea, to lay them open to the ſword of the enemy, and to all thy judgments. But I pray thee (O Lord) that thou wouldeſt in mercy make up that breach, *Build up the walls of Jeruſalem*, the City wherein thy Temple is built, and thy Name is called upon, the ſeat of thy Worſhip and Service.

Doct. 5 Sins of the Magiſtrate provoke God's anger very highly.

Doth *David* confeſs, that by his ſins of adultery and murther he had done what lay in his power, even to pull down the walls of God's Church and people, even to lay them open to God's judgments, plagues and puniſhments? Then hence we learn, That

that the ſins of the Prince and Magiſtrates and chief Rulers, as Kings, Queens, &c. they do caſt the whole people and Kingdome into great danger, and do provoke God's anger againſt them, and open the floud-gates of God's vengeance: for their ſins be as their perſons be, and a ſmall ſin in a great Magiſtrate, in a Miniſter, in a King, is a great ſpot, and a foul blemiſh. The *Ægyptians* were all afflicted by reaſon of *Pharaoh's* tranſgreſſion. So we ſee that when *Achan* ſinned, though no great man, yet it brought the curſe of God upon all the people. So in the days of *Saul*, *Ahab*, *Joram*, and the like; when ſuch Kings lived in impiety, idolatry, and did ſo perſecute God's people and Prophets, we ſee in the Word how God did plague both them and their people.

The reaſons why the ſins of the King do inwrap the people in that judgment of God, is this; becauſe look how the King is, ſo (for the moſt part) are the people; if he be an Idolater, ſo are they: for look how

the King is affected, ſo be moſt of his ſubjects.

Uſe 1. Seeing this is ſo, that the ſin of the Prince and the chief Magiſtrates is ſo great a means to pull down God's judgment upon the whole people, and wraps them up in the like judgment, as we ſee in *David*, who for his ſin of numbring the people ſeventy thouſand were ſlain: we learn hence, that it is a great mercy of God to have ſuch a King as walks with God, is careful to honour God, and to live in his fear; for then he ſhall not onely procure a bleſſing upon himſelf, but on all his people and ſubjects: and the contrary is a fearful judgment of God upon a Land, when he gives them wicked Kings and Princes.

2 Sam. 24.

Eſ. 3. 1, 2.

Doct. 6 A penitent will ſeek to build up that which before he had pulled down.

We learn by the example of *David*, that thoſe who have by their ſins hindered the good eſtate of God's Church and people, whether King, Prince, Magiſtrate or Miniſters, if they do truly repent, they will be as careful to build up the walls of God's Church again, to pray for it, to pro-

procure the good of it. *Saul* did perſecute the Church, he ſought the ruine of it, and to pluck out the throat of poor Chriſtians, and to ſuck their bloud; but after he was wounded and humbled, he became a Preacher of the Word, and ſought to build as faſt as ever he pulled down before. Acts 9. 2 Cor. 33. 14.

Well then, haſt thou heretofore hated God's children, perſecuted them, reproached them, ſought to hinder the good of God's Church and people, and the Goſpel of Chriſt? If thou doſt ever repent, thou muſt ſhew it in this, in loving God's children, furthering God's truth, upholding Chriſt's Kingdom, and glorifying his Goſpel; elſe thou doſt never ſoundly repent. Haſt thou by evil examples by a ſinful life, by negligence of holy duties, by lewd advice and wicked counſel, drawn and allured others to ſin, and to bring God's judgments upon them? if thou doſt truly and earneſtly repent, thou ſhalt bewail this ſin, and pray for them whom thou haſt thus wronged. *Uſe 2.*

Doct. 7. A man cannot pray till he repent.

Again, out of the whole verse mark this lesson and instruction well, namely, that *David*, who before durst hardly approach unto God, and open his mouth in prayer for himself, yet now upon his repentance and reconciliation with God, is bold to pray for others, yea, to pray for the whole Church of God. Hence we learn, That as long as a poor mortal man lives in sin without pardon and true repentance, he cannot pray for himself, he cannot, and dares not open his mouth unto God to pray for himself, much less for others; but when he shall truly repent, turn to God, after he is reconciled to God in Christ, then he can come with much boldness unto God, and pray for himself and others also. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*; shewing, that till he was converted, he could not help or strengthen his brethren.

Seeing before men and women be converted and do repent, and be at peace with God, it is impossible they should pray for others, or do any good

good: This ſhould firſt admonish all Miniſters of the Word of God to repent, and to be at peace with God, for otherwiſe it is impoſſible for them to pray for others, or do any good thing to pleaſe God. And though they teach and preach the Word, yet they ſin in it, and pleaſe not God, and cannot perform one ſpecial part of their Office, namely, to pray for God's people effectually.

VERSE XIX.

Then ſhalt thou accept the ſacrifice of righteouſneſs, even the burnt-offering and oblation; then ſhall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.

IN this verſe is contained the fruit of God's mercy and favour, both to *David* and the people, and the fruit is double.

Firſt, in regard of God, that he ſhall then accept, and be well pleaſed with their ſacrifices.

Secondly, in regard of *David* and the people, they vow and covenant with the Lord to offer praiſe and thanks

thanks unto God for ſo great a favour and bleſſing.

Then ſhalt thou accept the ſacrifice.

AS if he ſhould ſay, O Lord, when thou ſhalt thus be favourable to thy poor Spouſe the Church, and forgive my heinous offences, and make good that breach which is broken by my filthy ſins; then ſhall thy mercy be ſeen, in that thou ſhalt accept of our ſacrifices, and ſuch duties of thy ſervice and worſhip as we ſhall perform unto thee.

The Doctrin is this: When a people or kingdom do repent and turn to God for mercy, amend their lives, ſo as God is reconciled unto them, then doth he accept of their ſacrifices, oblations, prayers, &c. being done in faith and repentance: but ſo long as they live in ſin without repentance, the Lord being not reconciled unto them, he eſteems not of that they do.

Uſe 1. Seeing the Lord doth then accept of a people when they repent, and be reconciled unto God, amend their ſinful lives: let us learn from this Doctrin,

Doctrin, that if we desire to have the Gospel continued, our peace prolonged, and the service and worship of God to be established, there is no other way but this, to seek to God by true repentance, to get our sins pardoned, and to be at peace with the Almighty.

O then repent and amend, for if you will not repent and amend your works and ways, the Lord our God will not accept of us, nor regard us: *Jer.* 7. yea, he will remove our *Candlestick* from us, *Rev.* 2. that our golden days shall have an end, and our mirth shall be turned into mourning, and our light into darkness.

The sacrifice of Righteousness.

THat is, such sacrifices as are done by the prescript rule of the holy Word, such as God requires, and in that right and lawful manner which he commands in his holy Word. Now the sacrifice of a troubled spirit, is the incense of tears which God did accept at *David's* hand: for they that sow in tears shall reap in joy, as *David* did; for he found more com-

comfort after his confeſſion then he did before.

Doct. 1. What be thoſe ſacrifices that God doth accept of.

Hence we ſee what be thoſe ſacrifices which the Lord accepteth of in his worſhip and ſervice, namely, *the ſacrifice of righteouſneſs*, that is, lawful ſacrifices, allowed and warranted by the word of God, and ſuch as being lawful, are performed in a right and holy manner, according to the preſcript rule of God's word: but as for the ſacrifices which are not warranted by the word of God, nor done in a lawful and holy manner, according to the rules of God's word, the Lord careth not for them.

Now it may be asked, how *David* can ſay, *The Lord accepts ſacrifices*, ſeeing in the former verſe he ſaid, God doth deſire no ſacrifice? Now he here affirmeth, that the Lord ſhall accept the ſacrifice of righteouſneſs.

I anſwer, That ſuch ſacrifices as are offered with opinion of merit, as the *Jews* did, who thought by offering a beaſt that God was ſatisfied, and ſo they might be bold to live in ſin, and ſuch as they offered (without faith

faith and repentance) the Lord esteemed not of them. No, let every true penitent sinner, like *David*, offer the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, and of a contrite heart, which is more then all outward sacrifices: for those who do truly repent and become good Christians, are termed or called God's Manuscripts, wherein he writes his Laws, and by them relates his will to others, that is a true sacrifice to have a penitent heart. No incense will God accept of, but our true and penitential tears, no sacrifice but prayers, put up to him in faith; no Mediator but his Son, and our onely Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the Son of his love, and the Lamb of his bosome. God doth not look so much at our actions, as at our affections, for God saith, *Son, give me thy heart:* he desires nothing of thee for all those gifts he hath and doth bestow upon thee from day to day but thy self: therefore if thou wilt give God the best and truest sacrifice, thou must present thy self for that sacrifice: there is nothing bet-

better for a ſacrifice to preſent God withall then our heart, nothing better pleaſing to him then that: God commands the firſt-born to be offered to him as a ſacrifice, and if we will do that, we muſt then give him our heart, for that is the firſt thing that lives within us; other outward ſacrifice God is not pleaſed to accept, becauſe it is corrupt, and God is immortal; and God being immortal, ſhall we preſent him with things that are mortal and defiled? Yea, it muſt be the heart, and a new heart which muſt be created by repentance; and that muſt come by our earneſt prayer, and a fervent deſire to hear the Word preached: for out of the heart comes grace and goodneſs, and out of the body comes onely natural infirmities; therefore we muſt keep our hearts with all care and diligence, for that ſacrifice which is performed without the heart, is but a counterfeit and a ceremonious ſacrifice, being aſſured, that *the ſacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not deſpiſe.*

But

But here he ſaith, that God will accept, and like of ſuch as are offered in a holy manner, according to the rule of God's word: that is, when ſacrifices commanded of God are offered in a holy manner, as in faith, repentance and obedience, and not to merit any thing, but as exerciſes of faith and repentance, and types of Chriſt Jeſus, to lead them unto him, and as teſtimonies of their thankfulneſs to God, and ſo far forth as they ſerved for the furtherance of God's glory, and the edification of his Church.

The Doctrin then is clear, That it is not left to man to ordain and appoint the ſervice and worſhip of God, to put in what he will, or to put out at his pleaſure; but if we will have our ſacrifice and worſhip of God acceptable and truly to pleaſe God, we muſt give the Lord leave to commend and preſcribe what he thinketh good, and we muſt not dare to adde any thing of our own, nor to take away his worſhip and ſervice. *Deut.* 12. 8. 32. we are forbidden to adde

adde or take away any thing from his Laws, in which he preſcribeth the rules of his Worſhip, *Deut.* 32. 17. When the Jews worſhip God after their own fantaſie, the Lord ſaith, they worſhip not God but Devils; and the Lord holds it a vain thing to teach his worſhip and fear by the precepts of man. So then, all ſuch ſacrifices of righteouſneſs be the Worſhip of God, which he warranted by his Word; and nothing may go under the name of his Service and Worſhip, but that he preſcribes in his Word.

This condemns the greateſt part of the Worſhip of God amongſt the Papiſts, their ſeven Sacraments, their adoration of Images, and their praying to Saints, their abhominable Maſs, their voluntary Poverty, and perpetual Chaſtity: for which they can ſhew no word of warrant in all the Scriptures: and therefore it is no right ſacrifice, and ought to be abhorred.

This meeteth juſt with the common Chriſtians, all men (though never

ver ſo vile) will confeſs God muſt be adored; but when it is demanded what is the ſacrifice that God likes of, then they offer what they liſt themſelves: Some imagine they ſerve God well with their good meaning, ſome, by their good doings, and by their good dealings, and civil honeſt life, ſo long as they think no harm, nor ſay none, they think they ſerve God as well as the beſt: Some think, if they rehearſe and number over the ten Commandments and the Creed for prayers, they ſerve God highly: but poor ſoule, is this all you do in God's ſervice? Is here all the ſacrifice you offer him? It is a cold and ſlender ſacrifice. Let our ſacrifices which we offer God be firſt exact and pure; ſecondly, conſtant. Firſt, pure, without hypocriſie, and undefiled without being mingled with earthly cares; and our hearts likewiſe free from envy and malice. Secondly, conſtant we muſt be in our ſacrifice, not ſerve God by fits and ſtarts, or when we are at leiſure: this is no true ſacrifice, we ought to do it exactly and

with

with holineſs and righteouſneſs as it becomes Chriſtians. In the old Law they offered the ſacrifice of burnt-offerings, a Lamb without ſpot or blemiſh: ſomething was ſtill offered as an oblation to pacifie God's wrath: now if we cannot offer that ſacrifice of a Lamb without ſpot or blemiſh, which is meant our ſouls, then let us bring two Turtle Doves with us, that is, our Love and obedience; for the Turtle Doves are ſo loving each to other, that they are never aſunder: if we cannot offer that ſacrifice, let us bring a pair of young Pigeons, that is, our ſacrifice of a contrite heart, ſighing, and ſorrowing for our ſins; for Pigeons they are always mourning and ſorrowing. If we cannot pray, let us hold up our hands; if we cannot weep for our ſins, let us ſigh out our prayers; if we cannot ſigh, let us labour to humble our ſelves; and if we can but do this, then will God accept our ſacrifice, and hear our petition, and ſend us our deſires, even bleſſings upon bleſſings, both outward

ward and inward; outward in our temporal eſtates, and inward by ſpiritual and heavenly thoughts to our ſouls; and for the time to come, let us double our care and diligence, and take time while we have it, and take the Balm of *Gilead* while we have ſtrength to apply it; for no man can work when night comes: when death hath ſeiſed us there is no repentance to be looked for, no ſacrifice to be offered.

Then ſhall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.

IN this part of the verſe is ſhewed what is the fruit of God's mercy in *David* and the people, namely this, that they will promiſe and covenant with God for their deliverance, to offer unto God praiſe and thankſgiving.

Hence we learn, That it is our duty to bind our ſelves by ſolemn covenant and promiſe to God, that if he will deliver us from miſery, trouble, affliction, judgment, puniſhment, and from unreaſonable men, that then we will offer him praiſe

Doct. 3. Solemn Vows a Chriſtians duty.

praise and thanksgiving, call upon
Gen. 28. him, serve and worship him all our
2. days. *Jacob* vowed, that if the Lord
1 Cor. 3. 3 would be with him in his journey,
Psal. 116. to keep him, and defend him in it,
he would then build a house to God,
and worship him there. *Josias* made
a covenant unto the Lord, and all the
people with him, to serve the Lord,
who did deliver him from the curse
of the Law. *David* did often use this,
to bind himself by a covenant to
serve the Lord, *Psal.* 116. he payed his
vows he made to God. So *Jeptha.*,
Judg. 11. vowed unto the Lord, that
he would offer sacrifice unto the Lord
who gave him victory; and though
the matter of his vow was unlawful,
yet his vow to honour God was the
fruit of faith.

Use 2. Well then, let us make our use of
this doctrin; and seeing it is not onely
lawful, but also our duty, even for
to make solemn covenants unto God,
that if he will be favourable unto
Sion, and build up the walls of *Jeru-*
salem; that if he shall deliver us from
any danger, judgements, affliction
what-

whatſoever, that he will be careful to honour God, to be thankful unto his Divine Majeſty. Let us then make this Covenant with the Lord our God, let us vow obedience and newneſs of life, and let us ſay with *David*, *I have ſworn, and am ſtedfaſtly purpoſed to keep thy righteous judgments.* So let us even take a ſolemn vow of our own ſelves, that by the grace of Almighty God we will have more care to laud God, to honour him, to ſerve him, to call upon him, and accordingly let us be mindful to perform the ſame; for the Lord will require all the vows we make unto him. Pſal. 119.

This may ſtir us up to remember what a ſolemn vow and promiſe we have made in Baptiſm, to forſake the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, that we will forſake the Devil, ſin and Satan, ſo as we will not follow nor be led by them; yea, that we will manfully fight under the Banner of Chriſt Jeſus, and become his faithful ſouldiers and ſervants unto our lives end.

This

This is the Covenant which we have made every one of us in our Baptism and entrance into the house of the Lord, before the presence of God and his holy Angels, before the Congregation and Church of God: But (alas) we break it every day, and have neither care nor conscience to keep it. Well, let us know, the Lord will one day require our Covenants and Vows which we have made unto him: He looketh that we should as well keep them as make them. Well then, wouldst thou be loath to break thy Vow, Covenant or Promise made to an honest man, especially being in thine own power to keep it, and such a promise as the keeping whereof may procure the much peace, liberty and freedom? I know you would: O then let us be as careful to keep promise with God, and to renounce the world, the devil our enemy, and our sinful lusts, and let us be like *David*, to cross the devil's snares and temptations; and let our bodies be no more the receptacles of sin and transgression, which is the

the cauſe why our ſouls cannot hear the ſweet harmony of the bleſſed Angels, which if we labour ſo to do, we ſhall bring much honour to the Lord Almighty, and everlaſting good to our own ſouls.

Doct. 3. A publick thankſgiving after deliverance required.

And laſt of all we learn hence, that as it is the duty of every Chriſtian man and woman to pray both publick and private for the ſafety and good eſtate of the Church; ſo likewiſe it is our duty publickly to render thanks unto the Lord for deliverance beſtowed upon the ſame. We may not be like to the nine Lepers, who have wide mouthes to beg, but neither heart nor mouth to give thanks for benefits received. It hath ever been the care and religious cuſtom of God's Church and people, after great and notable deliverances from viſible and common judgments, to render hearty and earneſt thanks to God in ſolemn and publick manner. *Gen.* 8. when *Noah* and his ſons and family were newly delivered from periſhing in the Floud, the firſt thing he did, he builded an Altar, offered ſacri-

nce, and called on the Name of the Lord. So *Moſes* and the children of *Iſrael*, after their deliverance out of *Egypt*, when they were ſafe, and their enemies drowned, did devoutly and publickly ſing praiſe and thanks unto the Lord. *Deborah* and *Barack* did the like, *Judg.* 5. And the *Jews* being delivered from *Haman's* treaſon, *Heſt.* 10. they rejoyce and keep a ſolemn day to ſing praiſe unto God.

Well, let us bring this Doctrin to our ſelves; we are by God's bleſſing the true Church and people of God, profeſſing the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt truly, hating all ſuperſtition and idolatry, and for this cauſe we cannot want many enemies. The Papiſts, the moſt ſubtil, cruel and malitious enemy of God's Church, have often ſet upon us, aſſaulting us, ſought to have invaded our King and Country, as in 88. by ſundry treaſons to murther our late Queen of famous and bleſſed memory, and to deſtroy our gracious King and Queen and all his Royal poſterity. But amongſt the reſt, and above all the reſt, none

none comparable to that laſt treaſon, which was moſt cloſe and in ſubtilty wrought, a long time in hatching, moſt bloudy and devilliſh, moſt barbarous and ſavage, threatning and ſeeking to deſtroy and root out King, Council, Spiritual and Temporal Magiſtrates, aiming at the utter ſubverſion of our *Engliſh* Nation, both Church and Common-wealth.

And ſurely if we conſider well of it, I do not ſee in all the Bible the like deliverance ſo wonderful and admirable.

1. Being ſo long a time in hatching and contriving, with ſuch ſecrecy and concealment.

2. Being under the ground, in hell, as it were, in a place under the earth, deſiring darkneſs more then light, becauſe the deed was evil.

3. Being brought ſo near the execution of it, and never known nor ſuſpected before.

4. Being diſcover'd ſo ſtrangely, even by one of the Traitors themſelves, one of the chief Actors in that Tragedy.

5. Being so general, so fearful and so monstrous, as it should not have been to the destruction of one or two, but of the chief of the whole Land, King, Queen, Prince, Nobles, Judges, Bishops, in a word, the flower of the Kingdom; the want of any one whereof were a blemish to a State, and would bring a ruine to a Kingdom.

Now do as *Ahashueros* did, *Hest.* 6. 1. cause the Records to be read, and Chronicles to be searched, ancient and modern, divine or prophane, amongst the Turks or Pagans; yea, if Hell keep any Records, search there, and see if you can pattern this conspiracy or matchless danger.

But there is no councel against the Lord; man's wisdom is foolishness unto him, his greatest strength but weakness, his life but a breath, and his honour but a blast.

So then we see we have as great cause to render thanks unto the Lord as any people or Nation under heaven. The 5. day of *November* is a day to be remembred, and never to be for-

forgotten; a glad and joyful day, and we ought every one in publick and private to rouſe and ſtir up our hearts in thankſgiving unto the Lord; for it was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Such a plot, and ſuch a deliverance it was, that the like was never heard of. We may read in the Scripture of ſundry deliverances, yet not of ſuch a one as this: ſurely this horrible plot was hatched in hell. We may likewiſe read, that God did ſend down fire from heaven to deſtroy *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; but of a fire out of the earth to burn and blow up a whole State, I never read of; this ſurely muſt needs be from hell. This day was ſuch a day, that I hope will never be forgotten by our poſterity; for if it be, as the Papiſts do labour and ſtudy exceedingly for to do, perſuading the younger ſort that are under their tuition, that there was no ſuch plot or conſpiracy, and that no ſuch thing was ever intended by any of their Religion, onely a trick (as they ſay) put upon a company

of younger brothers, to satisfie some malitious and envious humours which were their enemies; so that, I say, if his days solemnity were not enacted by the High Court of Parliament, and the whole Body of the Kingdom, that it should be observed and kept holy, they would as they do still, labour to bring to pass that in a few years space it might be forgotten: which if we neglect to remember, and to give God thanks, as I have said, by our prayers and alms, the very fouls in the air will one day witness against us for an ungrateful and unthankful generation. The Papists boast and brag much of S. *Peter* for their guider and director, which if they did but imitate and follow him, they would not do as they do, but be of his mind, for he was humble and meek: but now they have left S. *Peter*, and practise *Salt-peter*, as they would have done, witness the fifth of *November*, and that likewise of 88. Is this to follow S. *Peter's* Religion and direction? they may well brag of St. *Peter's* Chair, but whether they can

of

of his charity; judge ye, my brethren, yea or no: for their Religion is rebellion, to kill Princes, to ſtab and poiſon Kings and Queens; their treaties with other Nations are onely treacheries, ſaunings and diſſemblings; their matches will overwatch us, if we do not look to them, better then with Match and Gunpouder, which (as I ſay) was laid as this day 45 years, to have blown the whole power and ſtrength of this Kingdom up into the air like Atoms and Flies in the Sun; take but notice, if ever you read in Chronicle or Hiſtory of the butchery of Kings, the depoſing of Princes, the Martyrdom of Religious Proteſtants, but ſtill a Papiſt and a Jeſuite had a hand in the plotting and deviſing of it; then judge whether their Religion be grounded upon God's Word, or from any Sacred Writ yea or no, or whether they have any warrant for this their diſſembling and diſguiſing their Religion with a cloak of knavery and envy, as they do being aſſembled together in one place. It is the

day which the Lord made for the glory of his Name, let us rejoyce and be glad in it. For God brought and delivered us out of the Egyptian bondage upon this day, nay, our Church and Country too from a day of darkneſs and idolatry, to a day of light and Sun-ſhine of the Goſpel. Some of us had not been living at this day, if their bondage and plot had effected: God this day ſecured us from other Maſters, that we might ſerve him; and for this ought not we to render thanks and praiſes? yea, or elſe let our tongues cleave to the roofs of our mouthes.

Now it is not enough to keep that day as an idle holy-day, to reſt from labour and work, to ring bells and make bone-fires, to give our ſelves to eating, and drinking, and ſwill, to ſport and paſtime; for this is no honour unto God.

1. But firſt, our thankfulneſs muſt appear in a moſt reverend and grateful commemoration and remembrance of this ſo great and wonderful a deliverance; we muſt call it to mind,

mind, think of the greatneſs of it; we muſt declare it to our children and poſterity, that when they ſhall ask the reaſon of it, we may cauſe and call upon them to be thankful: for the child that is unborn is bound to laud God for it, *Exod.* 12. 9. O taſte, ſaith St. *Gregory*, the word of life with the pallate of thy heart, and remember how good and gracious the Lord hath been unto us and our Nation, and what deliverance he had done for us ſinful men: what ſhall we then repay the Lord for his benefits? but onely return him by a living ſacrifice praiſe and thankſ-giving. And therefore let us daily aſcend Heaven by our meditations, leſt at the laſt day we deſcend the contrary.

Secondly, We muſt ſing Pſalms of praiſe and thankſgiving unto God in token of thankfulneſs, and that publickly in the Church and Congregation of God's people.

Thirdly, We muſt come together into God's houſe, to hear his Word and to call upon his Name, and that

is a ſpecial part of our unfeigned thankfulneſs. O how many men in theſe our dangerous and ſinful times live, and do nothing on the Sabbath day, ſpending it after their own deſires! how many in this Kingdom on this day, make their Chambers their Chappels, their Beds their Pew, their ſnorting their devotion, their Cook their Preacher, their belly their God, new clothes their Law and delight, and ſpend their time oneſe in invention what will pleaſe their humours. O I fear, my beloved, we have many of theſe ſins laid to our charge in theſe our evil days, which God in his mercy cauſe every one to be heartily ſorry for them. We have even furfeited with the good things of the land, as peace, plenty, and many other bleſſings we have enjoyed theſe fifty years.

Fourthly, we muſt teſtifie our thankfulneſs in moſt hearty and dutiful obedience, which is the greateſt and beſt ſacrifice, *1 Sam.* 15. and if his be wanting, then all we do is nothing worth, *Eſa.* 29. 13. So that for

for our general deliverance, there ſhould be a general thankſgiving in a general reformation of the Church and Common-wealth of our hearts and ſinful lives; otherwiſe indeed we are unthankful, if ſtill we live in ſin and rebellion; then (notwithſtanding our keeping a day, ringing of bells, ſport and play) if there follow no reformation of our lives, we may juſtly fear a more dreadful judgment, if not utter ruine and deſolation to follow. Now alas, where is this uſe of God's mercy and our deliverance? where do the people reform their lives, reform their ways, grow more religious, conſcionable and careful to hear, read, pray in their families? It is but a wonder of nine days, men make little or no uſe of it, but to talk of it, and ſpeak of it. O let us not be ſo careleſs of our own good, but uſe our beſt endeavour for the amendment of our lives. Which that all eſtates and degrees of men may do, the Lord grant for this mercy's ſake. *Amen.*

A Morning Prayer for a Family.

Lord teach us pray, that we may call upon thy name: prepare our hearts to seek thee, and open thou thy merciful ears to hear us.

O Eternal and ever-living Lord God, Creator and continual Preſerver of all things both in heaven and in earth; by whoſe gracious providence as we were at the firſt wonderfully and fearfully made, ſo we are no leſs preſerved and kept unto this preſent. We here, the workmanſhip of thine own hands, deſire to humble both ſoul and body before thee. And now, Lord, we being here in thy preſence, cannot but acknowledge and confeſs againſt our ſelves our own unworthineſs to come before thee, to call upon thee, or to perform even the leaſt duty that ſhall concern thy worſhip or glory. Our hearts, alas, are no better then ſinks of ſin, and a maſs of polution and unclean-

cleanneſs: and who can make that clean that is taken out of any unclean thing? The thoughts and imaginations of the ſame muſt needs be evil continually, and we unto every good work prove reprobates. Yet, O Lord, ſeeing thou haſt commanded us to call upon thee, and haſt mercifully promiſed to be preſent with thy children, to hear their prayers, and to grant their requeſts which they put up in faith unto thee: O Lord, this doth give us boldneſs to come before thee, and in confidence of thy goodneſs that thou wilt make good the ſame thy promiſe unto us at this time, we here offer up unto thee this morning ſacrifice of prayer and thankſgiving, humbly acknowledging and confeſſing from the bottom of our hearts our manifold tranſgreſſions and offences, which we have continually multiplied againſt thee, in thought, word and deed, from the beginning of our days unto this preſent time. We acknowledge, O Lord, that our original corruption in the which we

were

were at the first conceived and born, and from which there hath sprung forth the most bitter and unsavory fruit of sin, apostacy and rebellion, to the great dishonour of thy Name, the wounding of our poor souls and consciences, and the evil examples of others amongst whom we have lived: by the which, O God, we confess that we have justly deserved that thy wrath and indignacion should be poured out upon us, both in this life and in the life to come.

And therefore, O God, we come not here before thee in our own worthiness, but in the worthiness and mediation of Jesus Christ: beseeching thy gracious goodness for his sake to forgive all our offences, our visible sins, our secret sins, our sins of infirmity, our presumptuous sins, against knowledge, against Conscience, against Thee, against our brethren, in the time of our younger years, or in the days of our knowledge, as we must needs confess, that in many things we have

have ſinned all. We pray thee, O God, for Chriſt Jeſus ſake, to forgive the ſame unto us, and perſuade our ſouls and conſciences more and more, that thou art at peace with us, and that all our ſins are done away in the bloud of thy Son; and grant, O God, by the aſſiſtance and direction of the ſame thy Spirit, that with more freedom of mind and liberty of will, we may ſerve thee in righteouſneſs and true holineſs unto the end of our days. And, good Lord, begin not onely repentance and true converſion in us, but of thy great mercy perfect the ſame. O lead us forward more and more towards perfection, increaſe in us our ſaving knowledge of thee, and of thy Son Chriſt, our faith in thy promiſes, our repentance from dead works, our fear of thy holy Name, our hatred of all our ſins, and our love of thy truth. Frame our weak hearts (good Lord) more and more unto obedience unto thy holy and heavenly will, and teach us in all things to reſign our wills unto thy holy will, and in time

time of affliction, as in time of prosperity to depend upon thee; that we may not look too much upon our own weakness, but may stay our selves by thy power and promises.

And, good Lord, comfort our sorrowful hearts and dejected souls, that find daily such cause of humiliation in our selves, doing daily those things which we should not, and leaving undone those good things thou commandest: O then let us be truely humbled for the same, and for thy mercies sake give us better affections unto goodness, and power and ability to do that good thou commandest and requirest at our hands: that seeking in all good things to honour thee, and to extol thy Name while we live here, we may at the last behold thy face in glory.

And now, Lord, together with our prayers, we are bold to adde these praises unto thy great Name, for the manifold favours and blessings, the which from time to time thou hast bestowed upon us, for this life, especially for a better life. We thank thee

thee for that it hath pleaſed thee of thy gracious goodneſs to elect and chooſe us to ſalvation before the world was; for calling us by thy word in time, for juſtifying us by thy Son Chriſt, and for giving us a certain expectation of a better life when this is ended: As alſo for the happy means of our ſalvation, thy Sabbaths, Word and Sacraments. Oh! it is thy great goodneſs, O Lord, that thou haſt not deprived us of them all, in as much as we have from time to time walked ſo unworthy of thy love. O lay not to our charge our great unthankfulneſs, that we have not brought forth more fruit of thy Word in our lives, but give us, we pray thee, that for the time to come we may make more right ſteps to thy Kingdom. And we magnifie thy Name, O Lord, for all the temporal bleſſings which thou haſt in mercy beſtowed upon our health, peace, food, rayment, and for all the comforts of this life: O Lord, give us a right uſe of them, that we may not abuſe them unto licen-

Licentiouſneſs, but ſtirre us daily by them to devote our ſelves unto thee and thy ſervice. We acknowledge thy goodneſs towards us the night that now is paſt, freeing us from many eminent dangers both of ſoul and body, and giving us ſweet and comfortable reſt. We beſeech thee to be with us this day, and all the days of our lives, and teach us to walk as children of the light, that thy Name may be glorified by us, others may take good example, and we our ſelves enjoy the peace of a good conſcience, ſo as at the laſt we may come to reign with thee in glory.

Bleſs the Churches and Kingdoms wherein we live with the continuance of our peace and true Religion; be gracious unto the King and Queen, and all the Royal Progeny. Bleſs all others in Authority, the Miniſters of thy Word, our afflicted brethren, in body, or mind, or both; let it pleaſe thee, O Lord, to ſtay them, and ſupport them in time of their diſtreſs, and give unto them a happy iſſue out of the ſame, as it ſhall

ſeem

ſeem good unto thee. And fit us for harder times whenſoever it ſhall pleaſe thee to bring the ſame upon us; and keep us, Lord, in thoſe days by thy mighty power. And thus have we commended our ſuits unto thee, humbly praying thee to pardon our wants now at this time in the performance of this duty: and thou that art privy to our wants better then we our ſelves are, we pray thee to take notice of them, and miniſter unto us a gracious ſupply in thy own due time, even for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, in whoſe Name we conclude theſe our weak and imperfect prayers, in that perfect form of Prayer which he himſelf hath further taught us, ſaying, *Our Father which art in heaven, &c.*

Evening Prayer for a Family.

O Lord prepare our hearts to prayer.

O Eternal God, and our moſt loving and merciful Father in Jeſus Chriſt, and in Chriſt our Father: it is thy own commandment that we ſhould call upon thy Name, and it is thy gracious and merciful promiſe, that where

where two or three are gathered together in thy name, there thou wilt be present among them. We thy poor and unworthy servants, dust and ashes, yet the workmanship of thy own hands, are now bold to come before thee to offer up unto thee this evening sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving. And now, O Lord, being here before thee, we cannot but acknowledge and confess, even from the bottom of our hearts, against our selves, our own unworthiness, that we are grievous sinners, conceived in sin, and born in iniquity, and whereof we have brought forth most vile fruits in our lives, to the great dishonour of thy Name, the utter dismaying of our own consciences, and the evil example of our brethren; by the which we have deserved likewise thy wrath and heavy indignation should be poured upon us, both in this life and that which is to come, in such sort as no creature in heaven and earth is able to reconcile us again to thy Majesty, but onely thy Son Jesus Christ. We intreat thee therefore, O Lord, to be merciful unto us; and as we acknowledge our sins unto thee, so be thou faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to clense us from all unrighteousness. Wash us throughly from our wickedness,

ednes, and cleanse us from our sins; for we acknowledge, O Lord, that against thee we have sinned and done our evils in thy sight. Thou hast been a guide unto all our ways, who alone art the searcher of the heart, and the trier of the reins: to thee therefore, O Lord, do we come to crave the pardon of our sins, both for the guilt and punishment of the same, that so they may not draw down upon us our deserved judgment. And we intreat thee likewise, as to pardon our sins that are past in our lives, so to arm and strengthen us against sin for the time to come. Oh! we have woful experience in our selves of the weakness of our nature, how ready we are to fall from thee, and cannot keep so constant a watch over our own ways, nor over our own hearts, but still are ready to start aside. O Lord, direct us aright in the paths of thy Commandments, let thy good Spirit lead us forth into all truth, and these hearts of ours that are by nature so fraught with sin and wickedness, we pray thee alter and change, and bring into subjection daily every thought, and whatsoever thing else is in us, into faithful obedience unto Christ: let us find daily more and more the power of Christ's death

death mortifying ſin in us, and the efficacy of his Reſurrection, raiſing us daily out of the grave of ſin unto newneſs of life; and give us, Lord, that we may dedicate our ſelves, our ſouls and bodies to be lively, holy and acceptable ſacrifices unto thee. Let thy love ſhewed unto us, conſtrain us to love thee again, who firſt loved us. Thou, O Lord, haſte made us, and not we our ſelves, thou haſt made us not beaſts, but men and women, yea, after thine own Image; thou didſt preſerve us in our mother's womb, and didſt nouriſh us when we did hang upon the breaſt: thou haſt ſtill in mercy provided for us, and heaped upon us many bleſſings, which others want and ſtand in need of. O Lord, grant us a right uſe of all thy mercies, eſpecially for that thou haſt let us live in ſuch a happy ſeaſon of thy Goſpel, in a time of peace and proſperity, wherein thou doſt by thy Word continually call at the door of our hearts, and laboureſt our converſion, O Lord, we can never ſufficiently admire thy goodneſs herein, and the rather, becauſe we have from time to time walked ſo unworthy of thy love. Forgive us, O Lord, our unthankfulneſs herein, and let us now walk us children of the light. O it is too much, Lord, that

that we have ſpent the time that is laſt paſt according to the luſts of the fleſh: give us grace that we may ſpend that ſhort time that yet remaineth according to thy will; ſet before our eyes the ſhortneſs of our lives, the day of death is ſure in the end, unſure in the time, that we may be fully prepared for that ſecond coming of our Saviour unto Judgment. And now in the time of our proſperity, Lord teach us to think of the time of adverſity, and in the time of our health, let us remember the time of ſickneſs, and the hour of death, which ſhall come upon all fleſh. O let us be mindful of our latter end, let us number our days aright, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom, and ever mind that reckong and account which one day we ſhall give unto thee. Make us while we live here to be humble-minded toward our brethren, that we be lowly in our own eyes, that we get contented hearts, pure affections, chaſte minds, and wiſe behaviours, and all other gifts of thine own Spirit, that may adorn us in thy ſight, and may adde unto the credit of thy truth we profeſs.

And, good Lord, we pray thee accept of our thankſgiving unto thy Majeſty for all thy mercies and bleſſings from time

time to time bestowed upon us for this life and for a better. We praise thee for our election, vocation, justification, sanctification, continual preservation, and the assurance that thou hast given us of a better life when this is ended: as also for all temporal blessings, health, wealth, peace and prosperity; for thy goodness extended towards us for this day past, that thou hast gone in and out before us, and freed us from many dangers of soul and body, and brought us with peace and comfort unto the beginning of this night. Lord, watch over us by thy Spirit and presence, give us a holy and sanctified use of our rest and sleep, and fit us for the duties of the next day: especially, O Lord, fit us for that day which shall never give place to night, and grant unto us all good things that thou in thy wisdom knowest more expedient to give then we to ask, even for Jesus Christ's sake: to whom with thee, O Father, together with the blessed Spirit, we acknowledge to be due, and desire to give, all honour, and praise, and glory, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.